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High Germans in the Low Countries

*German Merchants and Commerce
in Golden Age Antwerp*



Donald J. Harreld



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HIGH GERMANS IN THE LOW COUNTRIES

*German Merchants and Commerce in
Golden Age Antwerp*

BY

DONALD J. HARRELD



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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

*This book is for Suzette, who encourages and
supports me in all that I do.*

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Donald J. Harreld
Provo, Utah

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 1484, Maximilian of Austria, the new Habsburg ruler of the Netherlands recognized Antwerp in Brabant as the commercial center of the Low Countries in lieu of the Flemish city of Bruges. His decision was not made lightly. When his wife, Mary of Burgundy, died in 1482 their son Philip was still too young to rule so Maximilian claimed the regency. Flanders objected to Maximilian's rule and revolted. During the ensuing troubles Antwerp remained loyal to Maximilian who rewarded the city with various privileges, and more importantly he instructed all foreign merchants in the city on the Zwin to relocate their offices to the city on the Scheldt. Few foreign merchant groups were quick to comply; Bruges had been the home to many foreign merchants for generations. They came to buy Flemish textiles and sell products that were in demand in the Low Countries. Eventually, however, most foreign merchants moved to Antwerp, though some later returned to Bruges to continue their affairs as before. But the damage to Bruges had been done, and foreign merchants began to see the advantages Antwerp held.

The act of shifting the commercial center of the Low Countries from Bruges to Antwerp transformed commercial relations and resulted in a new position for the Low Countries in the economy of early modern Europe. Commerce at the Antwerp market turned out to be very different from what merchants had been used to in Bruges. In Antwerp, foreign merchants usually were less interested in the locally produced products that had been the backbone of commerce at Bruges. Indeed Antwerp's local industry produced relatively few products of interest for international commerce. Foreigners usually sought goods imported into the city by other foreign merchants. Unlike Bruges, Antwerp depended on goods produced elsewhere to attract merchants to its markets. Echoing the words of J.A. van Houtte, Bruges was a national market, but Antwerp was a truly international marketplace.¹

¹ J.A. van Houtte, 'Bruges et Anvers, marchés « nationaux » ou « internationaux » du XIV^e au XVI^e siècles,' *Revue du Nord* 34 (1952): 91.

Bruges had been going into decline for the better part of a century anyway, although this commercial decay was so slow that merchants hardly noticed.² The silting of the Zwin River, Bruges's outlet to the sea, has traditionally been seen as the cause for much of the city's economic malaise by the fifteenth century. John Munro, on the other hand, is quick to point out that the protectionist measures Flanders enacted against English cloth imports coupled with the already stagnating Flemish woolens industry provides a better explanation for the failure of Bruges to keep the commercial dominance of the Low Countries.³ Nevertheless, while the causes of Bruges's decline and the spectacular rise of Antwerp are still not fully understood, it would be hard to account for either of these phenomena without taking into consideration foreign trade directed by large numbers of long-distance merchants.

For almost one hundred years, from the late fifteenth century to about 1585, Antwerp was the undisputed commercial metropolis of the Western World. Indeed, William J. Wright identified the "emergence of Antwerp as the single core of the world market" as one of only four factors that precipitated sustained economic growth in Europe after the mid-fifteenth century.⁴ It was at Antwerp that goods from across the world entered Europe and the place where merchants exchanged and distributed far and wide high value goods from across the European continent. Antwerp's place as the premier market in Europe was certainly the result of the actions of numerous foreign merchants trading in the spices from Asia, cloths both locally produced and from England, and metals from central and Eastern Europe to name only the most important products.

By the opening years of the sixteenth century Antwerp's markets teemed with all kinds of goods in demand throughout the continent. The South Germans, Hansards, and English had been coming to the city for years. The stage was set for dynamic new commercial

² Raymond van Uytven, 'Stages of Economic Decline: Late Medieval Bruges,' in *Production and Consumption in the Low Countries, 13th–16th Centuries*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), V, 259.

³ See the essay by John H. Munro, 'Bruges and the Abortive Staple in English Cloth: An Incident in the Shift of Commerce from Bruges to Antwerp in the Late Fifteenth Century,' in *Textiles, Towns and Trade*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994).

⁴ William J. Wright, 'The Nature of Early Capitalism,' in *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. 1 (1450–1630), edited by Bob Scribner (London: Arnold, 1996), 181.

networks as Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese merchants began directing more and more of their products to Antwerp. As many historians have pointed out, a unique convergence of products, merchant groups, and business techniques, or what has been called an economy of agglomeration,⁵ produced the spark that ignited the Antwerp economy once the English with their cloths, the Portuguese with their spices, and the South Germans with their metals found each other in Antwerp's marketplaces.

Few cities in early modern Europe depended as thoroughly on foreigners for their success as Antwerp did in the sixteenth century. Not endowed with a long tradition in textile manufacture like its Flemish cousins, nor a seat of government or the Church like its Brabant neighbors, at first glance Antwerp seemed an unlikely candidate for the commercial leadership of the Low Countries not to mention serving as Europe's commercial metropole. But a focus on trade took some time to develop. During the fifteenth century, Antwerp cultivated trade while its industry withered. Foreign merchants found new markets in the city for their goods. Antwerpeners began to believe that the city's prosperity depended on the success of its foreign merchants. These factors, coupled with the fortunate circumstances of the 1480s, propelled Antwerp, at least for a time, to the forefront of the European commercial centers thanks to the large numbers of foreign merchants who came to the city.

The idea to study a single foreign merchant group and its trade is not at all new. Many of the books that have dealt with sixteenth-century Antwerp have examined the various foreign merchant communities. Most of these studies have tended to focus on the "glamorous" trades of the English cloth merchants or the Portuguese spice dealers. One could point to the classic work of Goris on Italian and Iberian merchants written in the 1920s, the work of Coornaert from the 1960s on the French community, to Pohl's work on Portuguese merchants written in the 1970s, or Oscar de Smedt's book on the English nation in Antwerp published in 1954, or even more recently Ramsay's work on the English written in the 1980s.⁶ Also, though

⁵ Michael Limberger, 'No town in the world provides more advantages: Economies of Agglomeration and the Golden Age of Antwerp,' in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam, and London*, edited by Patrick O'Brien, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 53.

⁶ Jan-Albert Goris, *Études sur les Colonies Marchandes Méridionales à Anvers de 1488*

not a book-length study, Alfons Thijs's article on the Breslau merchants during the fifteenth century provides another example of a study focusing on a single foreign merchant group in Antwerp.⁷

But, according to Herman van der Wee, author of the monumental work on the Antwerp market during this period, "Antwerp's emergence as Western Europe's commercial metropolis and the growth of transcontinental trade centered on Central Germany were linked inseparably."⁸ So it is curious that scholars have neglected the German merchants (particularly the South Germans) who made up the vast majority of the foreigners operating in Antwerp during the sixteenth century. Antwerp and the German towns had enjoyed, after all, a long relationship. Of course several general works have treated the place of Antwerp in the grander scheme of the German trade network, particularly the classic book by Richard Ehrenberg, *Das Zeitalter der Fugger, Geldkapital und Kreditverkehr im 16. Jahrhundert*, first published in 1896. Most other works on the early modern German economy mention Antwerp only in passing. And books about the Antwerp economy rarely make much of the connection with Germany and the importance of German merchants. Even Herman van der Wee's work, while it does not completely ignore the role of Germans, does not treat the Germans in much detail.

If van der Wee was correct in suggesting that Antwerp's rising star was so closely linked to trade with central Germany, then intercontinental trading networks of the sixteenth century, based predominantly on overseas transport, must have had a much smaller impact on Europe's economy than was once thought. The traditional (and somewhat popular view) is that as Europeans struck out and found new sea routes, not to mention new lands, a noticeable shift occurred in the European economy. Scholars focused their attention

à 1567 (Louvain: Librairie Universitaire, 1925); E. Coornaert, *Les Français et le commerce international à Anvers (fin du XV^e-XVI^e siècle)*, (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1961); Hans Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen (1567-1648), zur Geschichte einer Minderhiet* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977); Oscar de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen in de 16e Eeuw (1496-1582)*, (Antwerp: De Sikkel, 1954); G.D. Ramsay, *The Queen's Merchants and the Revolt of the Netherlands, the End of the Antwerp Mart, part II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

⁷ Alfons K.L. Thijs, 'Een "gilde" van Breslause kooplieden te Antwerpen (einde van de 15de-eerste helft van de 16de eeuw),' *Studia Historica Gandensia* 197 (1975): 353-367.

⁸ Herman van der Wee, *The growth of the Antwerp market and the European economy (fourteenth-sixteenth centuries)*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), 119.

on Portuguese India and the Spanish New World as they sought to understand the sixteenth-century European economy. A case could be made, however, that the more mundane intra-continental trade is worthy of much closer attention. Indeed, by studying trade in places like sixteenth-century Antwerp and the trade of the various foreign communities living in the city, scholars might be able to better understand not only the early modern European economy, but also the many connections between Europe and the rest of the world that mark the beginnings of a new global economy (however one cares to define that term for the early modern period). So this book on the South Germans in Antwerp is in many ways the 'missing' book on Antwerp's foreign merchant communities; one that is intended to compliment the earlier studies of Antwerp's various foreign merchant groups.

The great merchant houses of Europe drove much of the commercial expansion of Antwerp. The German firms and their agents largely controlled trade between Antwerp and the German lands. All the great German merchant families such as the Fuggers, the Welsers, and Hochstetters were active in Antwerp during the city's *Golden Age*. An army of factors and other employees of the great German firms took up residence in the city. Many of these functionaries remained in Antwerp for years at a time, some even living out their lives in the city. Antwerp became a truly cosmopolitan city, and the German community was both visible and active in the city's social milieu as well as in its economy.

The German merchant community in Antwerp, however, poses a problem as it relates to the understanding historians have of the nature of merchant communities in this period. Most of the foreign merchant groups operating in Antwerp (and in most large European cities) during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries held specific sets of privileges from the municipal authorities. These merchant groups enjoyed a defined status; a status that was negotiated to be sure, but one that was for the most part favorable to the foreigners. But the non-Hanseatic German merchants in Antwerp were not accorded commercial privileges as a group (although the city granted some privileges to various firms or merchants from a particular city). Nevertheless, the non-Hanseatic Germans were very much a part of the city's society and economy. Since the Germans in Antwerp enjoyed few of the privileges that trading towns commonly accorded other foreign merchant communities during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,

one must ask not only why this was so, but also ask if there was not something about the German merchant organization that was a harbinger of a move away from the privileged merchant community toward what could be construed as more open, competitive, even individualistic, organizations in a general sense.

In their recent book, Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude suggest that the Dutch were the first to establish a truly modern economy due to Dutch financial innovations and robust commercial growth.⁹ While many of the changes in financial and commercial practice came to the northern Netherlands by way of the great international marketplace at Antwerp, it was often foreign merchants who introduced these changes to the Antwerp market in the first place. If de Vries and van der Woude are correct in their proposition, then Antwerp must have been a step along the path toward modernity at the very least. Surely the financial innovations that foreign merchant communities contributed to the Antwerp market can no longer be viewed as medieval. Most aspects of foreign participation in the Antwerp market indicate a shift toward much greater international market integration than was the case a century earlier.

Along those lines, historians have tended to think about the Antwerp economy as being based primarily on transshipment of goods produced elsewhere. Some years ago, W. Brulez touched on this problem when he raised the question of the balance of trade for the Habsburg Netherlands.¹⁰ Basing his study on the few figures that had been collected for Antwerp's trade around the middle of the sixteenth century, he suggested that the Netherlands experienced a negative balance of trade; it imported more goods than it exported. He also concluded that Germany may have experienced a negative balance of trade vis-à-vis the Netherlands. His figures were estimates from the contemporary sixteenth-century accounts, and he dealt only with total imports and total exports grouped by country rather than looking at where various goods were going and which merchant groups were involved in the trade. Brulez meant for his essay to be more a point of departure than a definitive study, and while this

⁹ Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁰ W. Brulez, 'The Balance of Trade of the Netherlands in the Middle of the 16th Century,' *Acta Historiae Neerlandica* 4 (1970): 20–48.

book can not begin to touch on all of the problems he raised it does attempt to offer some data about Antwerp's trade with Germany.

An examination of the data shows that South German merchants sent many of the goods they bought in Antwerp's markets to central Europe and even to Italy. Not only this, but Germans were very much involved in the trade in goods Brulez listed as Portuguese as a result of the activities of Germans in Lisbon. It was, by and large, Germans who purchased the bulk of the luxury goods like Portuguese spices, English cloths, sugar, and some wines. Furthermore, the Germans funneled most of these goods through Antwerp before sending them on to southern German towns or selling them to merchants from other parts of Europe. The research presented in this book also indicates that the products of the southern Netherlands were being shipped to Germany in much greater numbers than has been previously suspected, and that both the great merchant firms of the period and large numbers of small-scale merchants participated in this trade.

One might also ask what effect the average foreign merchant of Antwerp engaged in long-distance over-land trade had on the European economy in general, but few foreign merchants had the same experience and their effect on the economy was not uniform either. Antwerp was home to some of the wealthiest merchants in Europe, and it was also visited by great numbers of small-scale merchants. South German merchants of all stripes directed their commerce toward the cities of central Europe. In this respect it is likely the case that, as a group, the South Germans made Antwerp the successful market it was in the sixteenth century, for without them the primary markets of central Europe would not have been connected to the city.

Methods and Sources

This book focuses on the role the German merchants played in the commercial life of *Golden Age* Antwerp, and the place of Antwerp in the commercial networks that the German merchants constructed. The emphasis will be on the South German merchants, the so called *High Germans* (although discussions about the Germans from the north and the Hansard merchants are provided as well). The intention is to highlight Antwerp's less glamorous cross-country trade with Germany, which occupied most of the German merchants in the city

to one degree or another. The South Germans certainly formed a community in Antwerp and the form this community took is interesting. The German merchants' participation in the social and political life of the city was significant and their activities in the city were important. However, their reason for being in the city in the first place can not be forgotten. They were merchants first and foremost, so it is through a study of their trade that we can learn much about them and their place in the European economy.

Another goal of this book is to reconstruct the character of trade between Antwerp and Germany during the sixteenth century in order to trace the flow of products throughout the continent. This is important if we are to understand the place of Antwerp in the continental economy as a whole. Antwerp was a gateway city and the principal node on the network of commercial towns that spread across Europe. Great merchant firms, partnerships, and individual merchants were the historical actors that brought life to this network and cultivated the early modern European economy.

While 'grand theories,' intended to explain how society worked in history, abound in the literature none are very satisfying in the case of sixteenth-century Antwerp and its commerce. Rather than latching onto one theoretical perspective to tell this story, a better approach may be to accept that some historical issues are best explained by theoretical approaches that are rather discrete in their application. As a result, each of the two major divisions of this book is informed by a set of theories that help explain the issues under consideration. The first theoretical perspective concerns institutions and the way they determine transaction costs; the second concerns urban networks and their role in commerce. Both of these perspectives have long been a subject of study for historians. For the purposes of this book, I have tended to lean rather heavily on Douglas North's work on institutions and transactions costs, and when it comes to urban networks I have focused on the work of Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, and James Murray.¹¹ As a result, I have chosen to divide this

¹¹ Douglas C. North, 'Institutions,' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5 (1991): 97–112; Douglas C. North, 'Transaction Costs Through Time,' Washington University working paper #9411006, 1–9; Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); James M. Murray, 'Of Nodes and Networks: Bruges and the Infrastructure of Trade in Fourteenth-Century Europe,' in *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure*, edited by Peter Stabel, et al. (Leuven: Garant, 2000).

book into two parts: commercial institutions and commercial networks.

Antwerp's sixteenth-century resident German merchants bought and sold and leased real estate, entered into contracts, made donations, and participated in trade as much if not more than other foreigners. They routinely appeared before and presented petitions to Antwerp's *schepenen* (the aldermen of the city) to formalize their commercial affairs. Their highly visible economic activities included both buying and selling merchandise, contracting for its shipment in and out of the city, and engaging in financial investments and other speculative activities. Germans and city officials came together to negotiate things like toll exemptions, public debt settlement and repayment schedules, and Germans brought their commercial disputes to the magistrates. After the troubles of the 1560s Antwerp began to fall behind in its debt repayment, and the Germans, who were some of the largest of the city's creditors, fought hard to be repaid. The events of the 1570s, leading up to the Dutch Revolt, caused even greater fiscal turmoil for Antwerp and resulted in the default of much of the municipal debt repayment.

The German merchants, along with all the other merchants in the city, needed to negotiate the web of institutions that evolved in order to facilitate the kinds of activities they found most profitable. Because Antwerp's merchants were involved almost exclusively in international commerce the trade networks that developed and that they had a hand in developing, provided a structure—a skeleton, if you will—to Europe's economy. That said, my intention is not to discuss Antwerp's German community in order to prove a particular theory of commercial or urban networks, rather it is to consider the activities of German merchants in light of some well-known theories as one of many ways to understand their actions.

Sources that touch on German activities in Antwerp offer the researcher a long-term view of the minutiae of the Antwerp economy and provide a rich resource for the study of the activities of individual merchants as well as a broader context for Antwerp's international trade. But the richest source available for the quantification of merchants' commercial activities, and the one most often exploited by historians of Antwerp's foreign merchants, is the Hundredth Penny Tax registers of 1543–1545. Thanks to Charles V's ever present need to finance war, Mary of Hungary, his sister and regent in the Netherlands, instituted a one percent export tax from spring 1543 to the end of 1545 on goods leaving the Low Countries. This Hundredth Penny

Tax provides a wealth of information to economic historians interested in the trade between Antwerp and Germany.¹²

The right to collect this tax was awarded to Gasparo Ducci, Mary of Hungary's financial advisor, in exchange for an advance of 200,000 *Carolusgulden*. His detailed tax registers, originally kept to ensure that he would collect the maximum amount allowed under the terms of the tax, are an invaluable source for quantifying sixteenth-century long-distance trade. Unfortunately for Ducci, receipts of the tax fell short of the 200,000 *Carolusgulden* he had anticipated the tax would yield. When one adds various related expenditures it would appear that Ducci was left with a deficit of roughly 51,000 *Carolusgulden*.¹³

From these tax registers, the researcher can get a 'snapshot' perspective of Antwerp's export trade with Germany during the middle years of the sixteenth century. The 1540s were years that most economic historians of the period would characterize as a time of general prosperity and economic growth for Antwerp.¹⁴ The registers also provide a great deal of information about which merchants were most interested in the trade with Germany, and which products they shipped to Germany cities.

In addition to the Hundredth Penny Tax registers, South German merchants appeared in many of the records kept during the sixteenth century in Antwerp and most importantly in the records of the *Schepenen*. The registers of the *Schepenen* provide information about a variety of contractual affairs, including real estate transactions. The city's magistrates also routinely issued 'certificates' for a variety of reasons. Certificates were written declarations by the Antwerp magistracy produced at the request of merchants (as well as others) for commercial or juridical reasons. Usually the petitioner was under oath in declaring the nature of the goods over which he claimed ownership,¹⁵ but certificates could be obtained for a variety of pur-

¹² Algemeen Rijksarchief van België (hereafter abbreviated as ARA), Rekenkamer (Chambre des Comptes), 23357–23364.

¹³ ARA, Rekenkamer 23364, f^o 2287v.

¹⁴ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 177. Van der Wee says that the late 1530s to roughly 1550 was, for Antwerp, "a new brilliant phase of expansion."

¹⁵ This definition follows the one given by the Stadsarchief Antwerpen in the *Nieuwsbrief* nr. 4 (2004). "Certificaten zijn schriftelijke verklaringen door een autoriteit, hier de Antwerpse magistratuur, afgeleverd aan particulieren, meestal kooplieden, die dit verzoeken om commerciële of juridische redenen. Meestal legt de aanvrager onder eed een verklaring af over de aard van de goederen die hij als zijn eigendom beschouwt."

poses. The *Certificatieboeken* in which the certificates were copied yield a vast amount of information concerning foreign merchants, including such things as information on merchandise being sent out of or (sometimes) coming into the city, information about merchants themselves (reputations, qualifications, nationality, status such as factor or agent, etc.), closures of accounts, satisfaction of debts, loss or theft of merchandise, and so on.

For instance, a typical certification of a shipment of goods out of the city might indicate the name of the individual who owned the goods, what the goods consisted of, and how they were packed. Some certificates even provided a facsimile of the merchant's marks affixed to the goods. The certificate might also indicate whose wagons the goods had been or were to be loaded on, provide the destination of the goods, and often indicate who was to receive the goods at the destination. A certificate such as this would serve to eliminate any possibility of ambiguity over who owned the goods and where and to whom they were to be sent. Because the *Certificatieboeken* exist for some years at the end of the fifteenth century and beginning of the sixteenth century before running continuously from the 1540s through the rest of the sixteenth century, they offer the researcher a long-term view of the details of the Antwerp economy and provide a rich resource for the study of the activities of individual merchants.

While the Hundredth Penny Tax registers and the *Certificatieboeken* formed the backbone of the source material for this book, I obtained important material on South German merchants in the records of the Antwerp treasury, notarial records, and citizenship records among others. I also consulted documents in the Augsburg city archives in order to broaden my understanding of South German merchant firms.

Structure of the Book

The first section of the book looks at the development of institutions, and the factors that contributed to institutional development. The theory of institutions along with a treatment of the importance of transaction costs in institutional development has greatly informed my discussion of commercial innovation in Antwerp, particularly the development of a structure for merchant associations such as the foreign merchant 'nations.' The first section begins by offering a short background to the development of the Antwerp market. It is not enough to simply portray Antwerp as picking up where Bruges left

off in the closing decades of the fifteenth century. Until the end of the fourteenth century, Antwerp was primarily an interregional market. The city was off the beaten path, some distance from the great overland trade route between Cologne and Bruges. Antwerp's markets traded mostly in agricultural products. The city had tried to develop a textile industry like other Flemish and Brabant towns, but most of the overland trade with southern Europe in which textiles were so important favored the cities in the south of Brabant that were closer to the Champagne fairs and the route to Bruges. Antwerp had a long and varied history and its place as Europe's commercial *entrepôt* was not inevitable. Neither was it inevitable that the city would attract so many foreign merchants despite Maximilian's instructions. Institutional development, in particular the notion that cities are commercial institutions in and of themselves, goes a long way toward explaining Antwerp's sudden rise. A variety of fortuitous events including considerable influence from Bruges in the organization of the Antwerp fairs, creation of specialty markets, and the development of the Bourse paved the way for Antwerp's ascendancy.

Chapter three discusses the question of foreign merchant groups in general and presents the foreign merchant communities who had set themselves up in Antwerp by the opening decades of the sixteenth century. Antwerp's *Golden Age* came into full flower as a result of a unique convergence on the city's marketplaces of merchants from various parts of Europe and the goods they brought to trade from all over the world. The foreign merchant communities held a great deal of both economic and political power in Antwerp because of their tremendous importance for the success of the city.

These communities were commercial institutions; they were the very heart of Antwerp's commercial success in the sixteenth century. The privileges Antwerp granted to them gave them advantages other merchants did not enjoy. These privileges often decreased transaction costs, making membership in the nation attractive to merchants. Some merchant groups erected symbolic barriers like rules requiring members to lodge at a particular place or only trade at a particular time. Sometimes these rules kept merchants separated from each other. Once these barriers no longer offered an advantage to the merchant (causing transactions costs to increase) the merchant nation became less important commercially. Because the focus of this book is on German merchants, the treatment of other foreigners is necessarily brief, but it is included in order to identify the place of

foreign merchants groups in Antwerp's society and economy, and to provide a comparison to the types of associations German merchants formed devoid of privileges but presumably advantageous from a transaction-cost perspective.

The fourth chapter offers specific treatments of the German merchant communities in sixteenth-century Antwerp. The Germans who congregated in Antwerp came from varied backgrounds and represented various degrees of wealth and sophistication. They often came together to present a unified face to the authorities, or to participate together in the social life of the city, but they did not all share the same commercial interests. By looking at the full spectrum of German merchants, from the representative of the wealthiest merchant firm to the mere peddler, we can begin to see the great variety that marked commerce in Antwerp.

The second section of the book takes a step back to look at the bigger picture of the commercial and urban networks, of which Antwerp's merchants were only one part. Scholars have offered a variety of ideas to explain how urban networks function—from variations on Walter Christaller's *central place theory* to theories derived from biological systems such as John Murray's recent theory using neural networks as a model.¹⁶ Particular attention in these later chapters will be paid to the structure and organization of the overland trade between Antwerp and German cities that were part and parcel of commercial networks. Of special interest in this regard are the individuals involved in organizing overland trade, the techniques used, and the problems transporters and merchants encountered along the way.

Chapter seven looks at the products German merchants were most interested in and the degree to which the demand for these products differed from market to market. The volume and value of goods German merchants obtained in Antwerp and shipped to German marketplaces is astounding, and provides insight into the distribution networks of Central Europe for the plethora of products discharged on the quays of Antwerp.

A chapter is also devoted to a discussion of the speculative activities of German merchants in the second half of the sixteenth century.

¹⁶ Walter Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1966); James M. Murray, 'Of Nodes and Networks,' 1–14.

German participation in the city's money markets was of such importance for the fiscal health of Antwerp that this cannot be overlooked, but speculation could not maintain the economy on its own. During the last quarter of the sixteenth century Antwerp could not avoid the troubles that shook the Low Countries. Certainly Antwerp's place in the European economy did not go into decline because merchants began to devote more and more of their energies to investments rather than trade; investment was after all one of the engines that drove economic growth. Religious warfare and political uncertainty took their toll on Antwerp and kept the merchants from their business.

Because of the onset of the Dutch Revolt, the conditions in Antwerp toward the end of the sixteenth century were such that the city could no longer maintain its position on trans-European commercial networks; it was no longer the ideal place for commerce it had once been. While Antwerp was able to weather the iconoclastic storm that hit on 20 August 1566, the Spanish Fury of 4 November 1576, during which mutinying Spanish soldiers killed 8,000 people, was much more difficult for the city's commerce to survive. By the time the city fell to the Spanish on 17 August 1585, trade was already only a shadow of what it once had been. In many respects the city's decline was just as stunning as its rise.

PART I

COMMERCIAL INSTITUTIONS

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CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANTWERP MARKET BEFORE 1500

Antwerp rose to prominence as one of the most important commercial cities of Europe during the sixteenth century, but this did not happen over night. A long series of events and actions on the part of the city's rulers and merchant groups ultimately propelled the city to such a rank. From humble origins as an outpost on the borders of the Holy Roman Empire, Antwerp slowly developed as a regional base for trade, and eventually as a continental marketplace. This chapter will consider the city's early economic development and examine some of the institutions that would play such a large part in the city's commercial success in the sixteenth century.

The factors that moved the city toward this end included the implementation of institutions well-known throughout medieval Europe. One was the establishment of staples for several key products; the other was the creation of a series of fairs. With these two institutions in place, Antwerp extended its reach from regional trade to international trade during the fifteenth century by attracting English cloth merchants and promoting a vibrant cloth finishing industry despite Flemish attempts at introducing protectionist measures. Once a favorable level of agglomeration had been reached Antwerp took off as a commercial center. A variety of new institutions favorable to trade, such as the Bourse and the various specialty markets, flourished in the city on the eve of the sixteenth century. None of these institutions were unique to Antwerp, but the sheer volume of trade that was generated was unheard of before the sixteenth century. Most of the people living in the city made their livelihood either directly from commerce as either merchants or engaged in ancillary trades, or indirectly by catering to the many merchants with business in the city. There is little wonder that in the minds of its population the city's wealth was linked inseparably to foreign trade.

Antwerp's Early Development

An agricultural settlement existed at the site of Antwerp during the late-Roman period (about the second century A.D.), but aside from the archeological record little is known of this apparently short-lived settlement.¹ The city had its origins in a more proper sense as a fortified place during the Merovingian period. The earliest written accounts describe a crude fortification surrounded by a modest urban area dating from about the mid-seventh century.²

As early as 726, documents refer to Antwerp as a *castrum* (a fortified place usually with some administrative functions).³ It was trade, however, not administration that gave the town a future. Whatever administrative function Antwerp might have had, the little enclave grew and prospered as a result of early economic activity initiated by Frisian merchant shippers who traded in many of the towns of the Low Countries. Early Antwerp differed from most of the coastal trading posts established by Frisian merchants, such as Dorestad, because it was fortified. Antwerp's walls may have lured the Frisians to the area in the first place because, by the Carolingian era, coastal trading posts gave way to inland fortified sites like Antwerp as merchants began to prefer inland towns for a commerce that was increasingly oriented toward long-distance trade.⁴ Over time, Antwerp became less important as a military installation as its commercial significance for the region increased, drawing people to the area.

In any event, the city's modest fortifications were not enough to stop the advances of the Norsemen who swept down on the Low Countries during the ninth century. According to the *Annales Fuldenses*, they put the torch to the little settlement of Antwerp in 836, burning the place to the ground.⁵ Sometime after its destruction, the inhabitants of the destroyed *castrum* rebuilt their settlement a bit to

¹ F. Suykens, G. Asaert, et al., *Antwerp: A Port for All Seasons*, (Antwerp: Ortelius, 1986), 17.

² *Ibid.*, 18–21.

³ J.A. van Houtte, *An Economic History of the Low Countries, 800–1800*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 23. See also P. Bonenfant, 'L'origine des villes brabançonnaises et la "route" Bruges à Cologne,' *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 31 (1953): 420.

⁴ David Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City: From Late Antiquity to the Early Fourteenth Century*, (London: Longman, 1997), 50–51.

⁵ F. Kurze, ed., *Annales Fuldenses sive annals regni francorum orientalis*, (Hannover: Hahn, 1891; Reprinted 1978), 27.

the north of where it had been and surrounded it with an earthen wall open to the river. Some Norsemen also may have settled in the area, giving a new breath of life to the one-time trading post.⁶

The Emperor Otto II ordered the walls enlarged and began construction of a castle around 980 as one of a series of forts along the Scheldt River bordering Flanders. The border of the Holy Roman Empire with the county of Flanders (owing allegiance to the French crown) became particularly troublesome by the twelfth century. By then (1106) the Margravate of Antwerp had come under the control of the Count of Leuven who then assumed the title of Duke of Brabant. But this early strategic importance of Antwerp as a military site did not preclude an increasingly important commercial orientation that had begun with the Frisians. In the eleventh century the modest commercial interests of Frisians, Norsemen, and others drew the city into the developing urban networks of the Low Countries.

During the Middle Ages, the growth of trade and the development of towns went hand-in-hand. Henri Pirenne's still influential definition of a city made a distinction between the fortified center of administration and the commercial focus of the true city.⁷ Populated places located fairly close to trade routes had an advantage over those farther away. For eleventh-century northern Europe, the routes between Cologne and Bruges were particularly important. If merchants traveling these routes had any contact with Antwerp, which was positioned a bit off the beaten path, it was because of the city's location as a point on the north-south trade route across Brabant to Namur.⁸ This north-south route concerned mostly local merchants, but its development brought Antwerp into the much larger urban networks of northern Europe.

During the eleventh century, in response to ever growing groups of merchants visiting the city, the Margraves of Antwerp, Gothelo I and later Godfried III, began improving the infrastructure of the city.⁹ These enhancements and early commercial activities, centered on the trade in foodstuffs—particularly fish—established Antwerp as

⁶ Jan Lampo, *Vermaerde Coopstadt: Antwerpen in de Middeleeuwen*, (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1999), 23–24.

⁷ Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, translated by Frank Halsey, 3rd edition, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 56.

⁸ P. Bonenfant, 'L'origine des villes brabançonnnes et la "route" de Bruges à Cologne,' 435.

⁹ Jan Lampo, *Vermaerde Coopstadt*, 29–31.

regional trade center. When Antwerp was still just becoming a regional marketplace for agricultural products, a few enterprising merchants struck out to trade in other areas of Europe. Some twelfth-century records mention Antwerp merchants going abroad in search of new commercial opportunities. By 1120 a few Antwerp merchants went to London to trade Rhine wine, cloth, and some spices, possibly in exchange for English wool.¹⁰ Later in the same century, some Antwerp merchants traded in the Rhineland town of Coblenz,¹¹ showing the first signs of the significant commercial prosperity that would come to Antwerp in later centuries.

It was in the thirteenth century, however, that greater numbers of Antwerp merchants began trading Rhine wine, fish, and some precious metals in England for cereals, tin, and, most importantly, English wool. These Antwerp merchants' activities likely caught the attention of the Rhine wine merchants of Cologne who found an outlet for their wines in Antwerp as well as an important source for English wool and woolen products that were becoming more difficult for Cologne merchants to obtain at Bruges.

Cologne merchants had been accustomed to trading their wines in Bruges in exchange for English goods. But due to the strained relationships between England and Flanders as a result of the Flemish siding with the French in the French-English wars of the thirteenth century, English merchants were looking for new urban outlets for their goods. By 1294 the trade route between Cologne and England shifted from Bruges to Antwerp. The benefit of a pro-English policy was not lost on the Dukes of Brabant who sought to increase the English presence in Antwerp. The best way to assure an English presence was to encourage an Antwerp base for English commerce with the continent.

For their part the English preferred to sell their wool at a staple which concentrated the export of wool to the continent in one place. This wool staple was the only place English merchants could sell their wool outside of England. The English staple differed from the staples set up by continental princes. On the continent, a staple was usually instituted by privileges in which particular staple goods coming into the city could only be further transported after they had

¹⁰ J. de Sturler, *Les relations politiques et les échanges commerciaux entre le duché de Brabant et l'Angleterre au Moyen Âge*, (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1936), 80–81.

¹¹ F. Suykens, et al., *Antwerp: A Port for All Seasons*, 24.

been offered for sale within the city. Antwerp, for example, enjoyed the staple in salt, fish, and oats for a time. The English staple market, on the other hand, was a place where commerce in a particular product was concentrated. Royal ordinances during the early years of the fourteenth century required merchants exporting wool to use the designated wool staple.¹²

The English established their wool staple at Antwerp from 1296–1297 and again from 1315–1316 and 1338–1340.¹³ In exchange for the staple, Antwerp granted privileges to English merchants that eventually formed the basis for the important English cloth trade in the city.¹⁴ In the fourteenth century English wool (rather than English cloth) was one product that succeeded in attracting Italian and North German merchants to Antwerp, as well as establishing the city for a time as the main distribution point for English wool throughout Brabant and other areas of the Low Countries.

While the English wool trade was important for the economic success of Antwerp, it may have been much less important for the Flemish cloth industry than has been supposed. It is possible that all the wool exported from England to destinations throughout Europe would not have been enough to fill the needs of the Flemish textile industry alone, much less the rest of Europe. Alan Derville, for instance, has suggested that all the wool exported from England in one year, would only keep about eight or ten thousand weavers in work, only a few thousand more than were working in the city of Ghent alone.¹⁵ Moreover, weavers did not rate some types of English wool any more highly than many Netherlandish wools. In other words, there may not have been enough English wool in all of Europe to account for the volume of high-quality cloths produced in Flanders alone.

Similarly, Verhulst has suggested that the indigenous wool of the Low Countries probably played a significant role in the area's textile industry. By examining industry regulations from the various towns, he found that the regulations rated regional wool higher than many other types of wool, and that local wool could sometimes be used

¹² Eileen Power, *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 87–89.

¹³ J. de Sturler, *Les relations politiques*, 189, 239–240, 337–338.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁵ Alain Derville, 'Les draperie flamandes et artésiennes vers 1250–1350,' *Revue du Nord* 54 (1972): 357. See particularly his calculations in note 24 on the same page.

in fine cloth production.¹⁶ It is possible that regional wool was even more important for production in the countryside than either English or (later) Spanish wool. Further, Verhulst found evidence that not only was local wool traded within various parts of the Low Countries such as Holland and Zealand, but that an active international trade in wool from the Low Countries existed into the late fourteenth century. The principal destinations for the wool of the Low Countries were the German cloth towns of Nuremberg and Freiburg.¹⁷

Of course, like most Flemish and Brabant towns, Antwerp had developed a modest textile industry of its own by the thirteenth century. England's disputes with Flanders contributed to the growth of Antwerp's textile industry as great quantities of English wool were sent to the city and the wool staple was finally established there. But even at this early stage, Antwerp was exporting far more wool than its own looms were consuming. Nevertheless, the English wool trade was not yet extensive enough to propel Antwerp to the forefront of commerce in the Low Countries.

While Antwerp's markets benefited from the English wool staple, its own textile industry gradually began to stagnate as the comparative advantage of the southern Brabant towns became more and more apparent.¹⁸ Much of the overland trade with southern Europe favored other Brabant textile centers such as Mechelen, Leuven, and Brussels, which were closer to the route between Bruges and the Champagne fairs. Indeed, Antwerp's textile industry had become insignificant by about 1350.¹⁹ But the trade in English wool set the stage for the more lucrative English cloth trade that came later. With the exception of this wool trade, however, Antwerp remained a regional market until the end of the fourteenth century. Antwerp's markets traded in the plentiful agricultural products of northern Brabant with its extensive cultivation in hops and flax, intensive cattle and sheep herding, the fishing industry, and also the harvest of peat and salt.

Antwerp's strengths were its favorable position as a port and its location between Cologne and the sea routes to more western areas

¹⁶ A. Verhulst, 'La laine indigène dans les anciens Pays-Bas entre le XII^e et le XVII^e siècle,' *Revue Historique* 248 (1972): 284–285.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 321.

¹⁸ Herman van der Wee, 'Structural Changes and Specialization in the Industry of the Southern Netherlands, 1100–1600,' *The Economic History Review* 28 (1975): 203–221.

¹⁹ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 18–19.

of Europe. Antwerp shippers traded in many of the northern and western European ports, and the barge traffic up the Rhine to Cologne was also an important part of Antwerp's transit business.²⁰

A number of troubles during the second half of the fourteenth century, however, nearly destroyed the Antwerp market. The weak successors of John III, Duke of Brabant (d. 1355), became involved in a losing war with Flanders. In 1356, several Flemish warships attacked Antwerp and forced the town to surrender. Flemish ground forces also proved too much for Brabant and in 1357 the duchy transferred Antwerp, Mechelen, and several other towns along the Scheldt to the Count of Flanders. Almost immediately, Antwerp commerce fell under the domination of Bruges. What was left of Antwerp's textile industry collapsed, and the city lost its staples in fish, oats, and salt.

Oddly enough, it was during this period of domination by Flanders that the fair cycle of Antwerp began to flourish, as both of Antwerp's yearly fairs came under the supervision of the merchants of Bruges. As Flemish textile interests from Bruges sought to curb what little textile industry remained in Antwerp, commerce became an even more significant activity for the city. It may very well have been the dominance of Bruges merchants in Antwerp, and the collapse of the city's indigenous textile industry that set the stage for Antwerp's reliance on foreign trade and its favorable treatment of merchants.

Like many early fairs, Antwerp's fairs developed by custom rather than by privilege as local merchants came together to trade their goods.²¹ The timing of these fairs followed the traditional market patterns of the largely agricultural hinterland: a fair during the fall harvest time; and one during the spring when farmers sheared their sheep.²² Antwerp's fairs achieved a privileged status when the Duke of Brabant confirmed the city's right to hold the fairs sometime around 1300. Once near-by Bergen op Zoom organized its fairs in the mid-fourteenth century, an almost continuous cycle for trade emerged. A fair occurred twice each year in Antwerp and twice in

²⁰ Herman van der Wee and Jan Materné, 'Antwerp as a World Market in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' in *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis*, edited by Jan van der Stock, (Antwerp: Snoeck-Ducaju en Zoon, 1993), 23

²¹ Floris Prims, 'De Antwerpse Jaarmarkten,' in *Antwerpensia* vol. 18, (Antwerp: de Vlijt, 1948), 38–40.

²² Floris Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen*, vol. 2, (Antwerp: N.V. Standaard, 1939), 144–145.

Bergen op Zoom. The cycle of fairs opened with the *Coudemarkt* (or cold fair) of Bergen op Zoom which began toward the end of October with its payment period at the end of February. The *Paaschmarkt* (or Easter fair) of Bergen started three days before Easter with its payment period a week before Pentecost. The Antwerp fairs were the *Pinkstermarkt* (or Pentecost fair) which followed Pentecost, and the *Bamismarkt* (or the fair of St. Bavon) which began in September and had its payment period in November.²³

Despite the continued regional character of the Antwerp fairs during most of the fifteenth century, they succeeded in bringing foreign merchants to the area, making Antwerp a busy trading center, especially during the few weeks of the fairs.²⁴ English wool still remained in demand all over Europe, and the availability of English wool at Antwerp's fairs brought the city to the attention of foreign merchants. When the fairs were in session, Italians, Hansards, and English merchants came to Antwerp and found a market relatively free of restrictions.

Artisans held little power in the city by the end of the fourteenth century. The governing elite consisted primarily of *rentiers* who had no compulsion to work for the protection of old artisanal privileges like so many other cities of the Low Countries during this same period.²⁵ An infusion of foreign capital and foreign merchant activity, with the tax-farming possibilities these activities brought, made an open market unencumbered by the protectionist measures so common in the Low Countries a lucrative option for the local elites.

By the opening years of the fifteenth century, Philip the Bold, the Burgundian ruler of the Low Countries (and fortunately now also the Count of Flanders), reunited Antwerp with the Duchy of Brabant. This calmed the tension between his county of Flanders and his duchy of Brabant. Nevertheless, just as it had in the fourteenth cen-

²³ Florence Edler, 'The Van der Molen, Commission Merchants of Antwerp: Trade with Italy, 1538–44,' in *Medieval and Historiographical Essays in Honor of James Westfall Thompson*, edited James Lea Cate, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), 113–114. See also C. Sloomans, *Paas- en Koudemarkten te Bergen op Zoom, 1365–1565*, (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1985).

²⁴ Leon Voet, 'Antwerp, the Metropolis and its History,' in *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis*, edited by Jan van der Stock, (Antwerp: Snoeck-Ducaju en Zoon, 1993), 15.

²⁵ For a good explanation of Antwerp's local governmental structure see the appropriate chapter in: An Kint, 'Community of Commerce: Social Relations in Sixteenth-century Antwerp,' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1995).

tury, Bruges continued to be the focal point for international trade in the Low Countries during much of the fifteenth century. The Spanish, Italian, French, Portuguese, English, and Hanseatic merchants most often went to Bruges to conduct their trade in northern Europe. But the English and the Hanse merchants did not completely ignore the city on the Scheldt. They traded in both cities, bringing goods to Antwerp that formed the basis of their lucrative trade. By the late fifteenth century Antwerp was on its way to reaching the status of a world entrepôt.

*The Antwerp Market and International Trade
in the Fifteenth Century*

Antwerp's emerging international trade during the fifteenth century was oriented to northern Europe. The English and the North Germans continued and intensified the trade in the kinds of goods that had been becoming more and more important for the city already in the fourteenth century. By the fifteenth century Antwerp was poised to become the continental marketplace for English woolen cloths and for a variety of goods from Cologne and other North German cities. English and North German merchants continued to frequent Antwerp's markets in the fifteenth century and together they set the stage for Antwerp's prominence in the sixteenth century. The English began to replace wool with the more lucrative trade in fine cloths. By then England's cloth making industry had come to rival that of the Low Countries in both quantity and in quality, seriously threatening the prosperity of the cloth-producing towns of the Low Countries and the commercial prominence of Bruges. But it was to the Low Countries, and not to England, that merchants from around Europe went to buy textiles. For the English to succeed they needed to direct their cloth exports to the southern Netherlands, and they found an ideal marketplace at Antwerp.

By the fifteenth century, merchants sent fewer raw materials from the Low Countries to supply the textile industry in Germany than they had in the fourteenth century. They were much more likely to send finished cloths to German markets. Yet even late in the fifteenth century Bruges remained the principal marketplace for Flemish cloth, and only rarely would it have been shipped out of Antwerp. Antwerp's fifteenth-century export records rarely identified the place of origin

for most of the cloths they list. Most of it was probably English cloth, since the English had already begun trading their fine cloths in Antwerp, even in the face of import bans.

The English Cloth Trade

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the Flemish cloth-producing towns had succeeded in imposing various bans on the importation of English cloth.²⁶ Once under Burgundian rule, the cloth towns of Flanders were able to convince the Duke of Burgundy (ruler of most of the Netherlands) to impose several more bans on English cloth imports. The Duke of Burgundy responded to cries for protection against the threat the English cloth trade presented to local industry by instituting bans on English cloth imports several times during the fifteenth century. By instituting a ban on English cloth imports into the Low Countries he could protect the interests of his cloth producing towns, and stem the loss of specie to the English.²⁷ The northern shipping centers sometimes suffered from the bans, however, because the English trade was more often in the hands of Dutch shippers than English ones.

After Holland and Zeeland came under the rule of the Duke of Burgundy in 1425 the cloth bans were often ignored, particularly by the towns of Holland, Zeeland, and occasionally by those of Brabant, which were either engaged in finishing English cloth, or in transshipping them to Germany and the Baltic.²⁸ As a result, English cloth exports were not initially affected by these bans because they were most commonly enforced in the County of Flanders, not the towns of Brabant. Additionally, the German Hanseatic League—Flanders's best customer for woolen products—was exempt from these import bans provided that the English cloth was trans-shipped only and remained in bales.²⁹ So English cloth exports to the continent actually increased during the first third of the fifteenth century and remained fairly strong until the Burgundian cloth ban of 1435.

²⁶ John Munro, *Wool, Cloth, and Gold: The Struggle for Bullion in Anglo-Burgundian Trade, 1340–1478*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 40.

²⁷ Peter Spufford, *Monetary Problems and Policies in the Burgundian Netherlands, 1433–1496*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 96–97.

²⁸ M. Thielmans, *Bourgogne et Angleterre: relations politiques et économiques entre les Pays-Bas Bourguignons et l'Angleterre, 1435–1457*, (Bruxelles: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1966), 56–61.

²⁹ John Munro, *Wool, Cloth, and Gold*, 7.

English cloth exports dropped off somewhat after the 1435 ban began to be enforced throughout the Burgundian Netherlands.³⁰ Because the Hanse towns were exempt from this ban, and Italians had begun shipping English cloth directly to Italy from the port of Southampton,³¹ this ban was not too terrible for the English economy either. Indeed, the ban was more detrimental to the Low Countries than it was to the English economy. Still under pressure from Flemish textile interests, Philip the Good instituted the most far-reaching and most strictly enforced English cloth ban in 1464.

English cloth exports to the continent during the period of this ban were profoundly affected. Total English cloth exports plummeted to roughly half their pre-ban levels.³² Since the Hanseatic League was not exempt from the ban of 1464 and was having difficulties of its own with the English during this period,³³ the English were forced to ship their cloths primarily to the Italian markets that were less important as an outlet for English cloths than they had once been. Although English cloths were still highly valued in Italian markets, the Florentine cloth manufactories were now producing large quantities of good quality woollen cloths themselves, decreasing their dependence on northern European cloths.³⁴ The problem the English faced was getting their products to their main customers in central German states,³⁵ and to Baltic customers, without transshipping them through the cloth markets of the Low Countries.

The extent to which the English relied on the shipping industries of Holland and Zeeland, and conversely, the dependence this shipping

³⁰ E.M. Carus-Wilson and Olive Coleman, *England's Export Trade, 1275-1547*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 94.

³¹ Alwyn Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton, 1270-1600*, (Southampton: University College Press, 1951), 42-43.

³² E.M. Carus-Wilson and Olive Coleman, *England's Export Trade*, 102.

³³ T.H. Lloyd, 'A Reconsideration of Two Anglo-Hanseatic Treaties of the Fifteenth Century,' *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987): 916-935.

³⁴ For some good studies of the rise of the Florentine cloth industry see: Hidetoshi Hoshino, 'The Rise of the Florentine Woollen Industry in the Fourteenth Century,' in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe: Essays in Memory of Professor E.M. Carus-Wilson*, edited by N.B. Harte and K.G. Pontig, (London: Heineman Educational Books, 1983); and P. Malanima, 'An Example of Industrial Reconversion: Tuscany in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries,' in *The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and the Low Countries*, edited by Herman Van der Wee, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978).

³⁵ To illustrate the problem see the document in H.J. Smit, *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van den Handel met Engeland, Schotland en Ierland, 1150-1485*, Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën, ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1928), 668.

industry had on English products should not be overlooked. Other shipping 'empires' such as Genoa, or Venice in the south, or the Hanse in the north, built a considerable portion of their business shipping goods from one port to another without necessarily passing through their own ports. The ships of Holland and Zeeland that shipped English goods, however, were usually bound for their own ports with this merchandise.³⁶ So the English needed to find a port in the Low Countries to accept their cloth. With the bans still in force, the English would have little success in this regard.

Sending their cloths to the Antwerp markets was the solution the English had hoped for. Since Antwerp did not have a significant textile industry of its own, English cloths were never seen as a threat to the city's industry. Rather, Antwerp welcomed the opportunities that these foreigners with their lucrative cloth trade brought. Passing through the Low Countries, whether in the growing market of Antwerp, or the other northern markets and shipping towns, these English textile products continued on their way to the German towns.³⁷

The Burgundian cloth ban of 1464 was, in part, a reaction to the English statute of 1463 that prohibited the importation of certain goods from the Low Countries. English concerns over the loss of specie, as well as a desire to protect the English cloth industry from foreign competition were reasons for the statute.³⁸ Monetary concerns were not lost on the States General of the Burgundian Netherlands. The monetary question was a major point of discussion for the period between 1459 and 1465.³⁹ But by the 1460s the dependence on the trade in English cloth, particularly by the shipping towns of Holland and Zeeland, was so great that protectionist measures instituted to support the old cloth towns of Flanders were becoming detrimental to the overall economic health of the Low Countries as a whole.

By February 1465 the towns of Hoorn and Middelburg had petitioned the Duke of Burgundy requesting that their merchants be allowed to sell the English cloth already in their possession. In his correspondence with the burgers of Middelburg, the Duke made it clear that he understood that many of the townspeople were "accus-

³⁶ M. Thielemans, *Bourgogne et Angleterre*, 333.

³⁷ W. Brulez, 'Bruges and Antwerp in the 15th and 16th Centuries: an Antithesis?', *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae, Studies in the History of the Netherlands* 6 (1973).

³⁸ John Munro, *Wool, Cloth and Gold*, 160.

³⁹ Joseph Cuvelier, ed., *Actes des États Généraux des anciens Pays-Bas (1427-1477)*, Commission Royale d'Histoire, (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1948), 41-102.

tomed to making their poor living by buying and selling English cloths and threads in the town and in the area," but that this practice was forbidden.⁴⁰ The merchants had only one month to dispose of the cloth, which was not enough time to sell their large inventories. There was little the Duke could do, however, as cities simply refused to enforce the ban. Given the increasing dependence on English cloth for the economic success of the Low Countries, the failure of the 1464 cloth bans should come as no surprise. The English returned to Antwerp with their cloths once efforts to enforce the bans broke down after 1467, and from that point on into the sixteenth century Antwerp was the preferred continental gateway for English cloth distribution.

The Cologne Trade

The great demand for English cloth in German markets put Antwerp in an enviable position. With no significant cloth industry of its own, and an important trading relationship with Cologne, Antwerp soon dominated not only the trans-shipment trade for English cloth, but also expanded its textile finishing activities. From very early on Antwerp's artisans found a profitable niche in finishing English cloths. For instance, in 1491 two Antwerp dyers contracted to dye a quantity of English cloths, some to be dyed black, some green, and some blue.⁴¹ As a result of the finishing industry, at least a 20% premium could be added to English cloth finished in the Low Countries even after transportation costs had been subtracted.

By the end of the fifteenth century, cloth exports from Antwerp to Germany usually went to Cologne, but merchants also shipped them to South German cities like Nuremberg, Frankfurt, and even east to Leipzig. In addition to cloths of unspecified origin (clearly the bulk of these were English, but many of them may have been Flemish), the much cheaper sayes of the Low Countries (a 'new drapery' that was a light, high-quality cloth, made with worsted and twill wools) were also important for Antwerp's trade with Germany.⁴² It is quite

⁴⁰ H.J. Smit, ed., *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis van den Handel met Engeland, Schotland, en Ierland*, 987–88.

⁴¹ See Renée Doehaerd, *Études anversoises: Documents sur le commerce international à Anvers*, vol. 2, (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1962), 115, no. 779.

⁴² Raymond van Uytven, 'Textile in Europa, een industrie voor het stoomtijdperk,' in *Handel, Ambacht en Industrie*, edited by Wolfram Fischer, (Hilversum: HD Uitgevers, 1993), 34.

likely that many of the goods merchants shipped to Cologne continued on to destinations farther south like the Frankfurt fairs or the Nuremberg markets.

For their part, Germans exchanged grain, metals, and textiles in Antwerp for English cloths and the products of the southern Netherlands. German imports to Antwerp came into the city from three different areas: the area around Cologne; the Hanseatic Baltic milieu; and southern Germany with Nuremberg as the focal point. Throughout the fifteenth century, Cologne was Antwerp's most important trading partner, but trade with the Baltic and with southern German cities also contributed to the steady growth of Antwerp's economy. During the last decades of the fifteenth century and the early years of the sixteenth century, merchants from Cologne were the largest single foreign trading group in Antwerp, and they exerted a great deal of control over the trade between Antwerp and Germany.⁴³

Although the Cologne merchants dominated the trade with Antwerp during the fifteenth century, trade relations were not without occasional tensions. Cologne forbade its citizens to attend the Antwerp market in 1430, likely due in part to the restrictions on English cloth imports to the Low Countries, and because of a complaint brought against Antwerp by a Cologne merchant concerning unfair business practices regarding the sale of some wine.⁴⁴ But prohibitions such as this did not last long and relations between the two cities seem to have been mostly cordial.

The importance of Cologne was also evident in its place in the trade between southern Germany and Antwerp. Many of the imports from southern Germany were funneled through Cologne on their way to Antwerp. For instance, thirty-three percent of the import shipments recorded for the years 1488 and 1490–95 belonging to Nuremberg merchants came into Antwerp from Cologne.⁴⁵

Wine had been the basis for the trade between Cologne and Antwerp from at least the end of the thirteenth century,⁴⁶ and the majority of the correspondence between the cities touching on commercial matters dating from the fifteenth century deal with the

⁴³ See the various tables in Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*.

⁴⁴ Bruno Kuske, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kölner Handels und Verkehrs im Mittelalter*, vol. I, 262, no. 770 and 270, no. 791.

⁴⁵ Based on calculations from the *certificatieboek* entries in Renée Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*.

⁴⁶ F. Suykens, et al., *Antwerp: A Port for All Seasons*, 30–31.

beverage.⁴⁷ The most important German overland import to Antwerp from Cologne during the later fifteenth century was Rhine wine. During the years 1488 and 1490–95, officials recorded 75 shipments of Rhine wine from Cologne to Antwerp in the *Certificatieboeken*. These shipments formed only a part of all the wine imports to Antwerp; only those shipments for which certificates were obtained are included in these figures.

From Antwerp, northern German and Antwerp merchants distributed Rhine wine throughout the region, to cities like Ghent, Leuven, Brussels, and Mechelen. While Rhine wine represented the most important import from North Germany, wine in general was big business already in fifteenth-century Antwerp. Perhaps because of the development of a more refined palate, Antwerp developed a preference for foreign wines.⁴⁸ Wines from Poitou, Gascony, and Alsace, as well as “Bastaert” and “Romenye” wines, were commonplace in Antwerp. The same German merchants who were involved in importing Rhine wine into Antwerp imported and redistributed these other wines as well.

Dry goods comprised the second most important import item sent from Cologne to Antwerp. From the available records, there is no way to determine of what dry goods may have consisted, but it is quite probable that these dry goods were simply various goods—furs, cloth, spices, etc.—packed together in the same container. A variety of other goods was also imported from Cologne to Antwerp including: hemp, wood, paper, and fustians.

Commerce between Cologne and Antwerp was not a one-way affair; Antwerp's early export trade with Germany was by and large directed to Cologne. Geographically, Antwerp is not so distant from Cologne to have made transportation costs too high even for less-expensive goods. Shipments of dry herring, leather products, skins and pelts, salt, butter, and the like were routinely sent from Antwerp to Cologne, and were probably not sent much farther south. But because Cologne was the gateway for goods going from Antwerp to Germany and the principal transshipment center for goods destined farther south,

⁴⁷ Bruno Kuske, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kölner Handels und Verkehrs im Mittelalter*, vol. I, 352; vol. II, 41, 191, 203, 293, 481, 495, 499, 514.

⁴⁸ For more on some of the reasons for a preference for foreign wines in Antwerp see Raymond van Uytven, ‘The consumption of domestic and foreign wines in Brabant in the sixteenth century,’ in *Production and Consumption in the Low Countries*, XIII: 1–27.

it is quite possible that some of Antwerp's fifteenth-century exports to the city were ultimately destined for southern German cities.

The agricultural products of Antwerp's hinterland, on the other hand, were not likely to have been shipped very far, so few probably made it much farther than Cologne. Dairy products, for instance, were not only a staple in the diet of Netherlanders, but as animal husbandry (in particular cattle herding) became the most important agricultural activity in the Low Countries,⁴⁹ dairy products became important trade items as well. Antwerp was home to a large dairy products market. Indeed, Antwerp's cheese market (known variously as the *Zuivelmarkt* or *Kaasmarkt*) had been in operation in the city since at least 1400.⁵⁰

Thanks to Antwerp's status as a deep port, herring, both dried and smoked, was also exported to Germany from a fairly early date. From at least the second half of the thirteenth century, Antwerp fish merchants shipped herring to England in exchange for English wool, and as a result of this early herring business the city developed important trading relationships with Zeeland.⁵¹ The longtime herring trade with Cologne became especially lively after about 1450 with the development of a new type of fishing ship, the 'herring bus,' which facilitated the processing of the fishes while still at sea.⁵²

Herring was sold in a variety of forms: wet, dried, smoked, and most commonly salted. Indeed, by October 1480 Cologne, Antwerp, Dordrecht, and Zierikzee jointly drafted ordinances concerning the salting and packing of herring sold at the Antwerp fairs, specifically the *Pinckstermarkt* and *Bamismarkt* which coincided with the major fishing seasons.⁵³

⁴⁹ Herman van der Wee points out that despite a general agrarian malaise during much of the fifteenth century, raising cattle became more widespread supplanting grain cultivation as the most important agricultural activity in Brabant. He also notes that the demand for dairy products remained high throughout the period and even increased by the 1490s. See Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 31, 114–115.

⁵⁰ Robert vande Weghe, *Geschiedenis van de Antwerpse Straatnamen*, (Antwerp: Mercurius, 1977), 242. Vande Weghe cites an ordinance of 1399 in which it is stated that "yeghelic die . . . vut staen willen met boteren, casen ende anders datter toe hoert, dat die staen selen . . . op de zuivelmerct . . ."

⁵¹ F. Suykens, et al., *Antwerp: A Port for All Seasons*, 29–30. The salt used in curing the fish usually came from Zierikzee, while the herring itself often came from fishing centers like Reimerswaal, Kruiningen, and Biezelinge.

⁵² James D. Tracy, 'Herring Wars: The Habsburg Netherlands and the Struggle for Control of the North Sea, ca. 1520–1560,' *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24 (1993): 252.

⁵³ Bruno Kuske, ed., *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kölner Handels und Verkehrs im Mittelalter*, 432, no. 816.

Antwerp and the Hanseatic League

The Hanseatic League, apart from Cologne, was also a significant force in Antwerp's trade during the fifteenth century. These North German seafaring merchants were not important only for Antwerp's trade, but had been significant for North Sea commerce for centuries. Even though Cologne merchants were usually associated with the Hanseatic League before 1500, in Antwerp they need to be considered separately from the Hansards for a couple of reasons. First of all, not all merchants from Cologne were identified in the Antwerp records as Hanse merchants. Secondly, Cologne's status as a Hanse town was in question during part of the fifteenth century stemming from the town's discontent with the tax of 1447 instituted by the League's Bruges Kontor on imports and exports of Hanseatic merchandise into and out of the city. Due to this dispute, Cologne engaged in some unilateral trading relationships after about 1465 which angered the other Hanse towns. Cologne was excluded for a time from the Hanseatic League in 1471.⁵⁴ Within a few years, however, Cologne was readmitted to the Hanse (after certain sanctions were imposed, including a payment of its share of the tax which was in arrears), but its position and influence in the League never seems to have returned to its pre-1471 level.

The Hanse centered virtually all of its activities in the Low Countries on the Kontor in Bruges, but it maintained an office in Antwerp. The presence of a Hanse office lent a certain prestige to the city on the Scheldt. Unfortunately, due to the privileged place of the Hanse in the city's commerce, few Antwerp sources document the specifics of its activities.⁵⁵ It is clear, however, that the Hanse was responsible for importing wheat, oats, and ash from the Baltic region into Antwerp, and these were not entirely for the consumption of the Antwerp market.

By 1479, the Hanse had established Antwerp as its entrepôt for the grain trade. The staple for the grain production of the Low Countries and even parts of northern France had long been at Ghent. By locating their grain trade in Antwerp, Hanse merchants sought

⁵⁴ Philippe Dollinger, *La Hanse (XII^e-XVII^e siècles)*, (Paris: Aubier, 1964), 378.

⁵⁵ This may seem like a contradiction, but it was precisely because the privileges held by the Hanse exempted it from so many fees and taxes that records which might have detailed specific trading activities were not kept. For instance, the Hanse was exempt from most forms of taxation, so Hanse merchants do not appear in very many of these sorts of records.

to profit from proximity to an already well-known grain trade along the Scheldt River. Much of the wheat imported into Antwerp by the Hanse, for instance, was re-exported to Portugal for sale, the profits of which were used to buy sugar destined for Antwerp's sugar market.⁵⁶ Thanks to the activities of the Hanse, the Antwerp grain market was well known by the early years of the sixteenth century. In 1505 the King of Spain commissioned a Spanish merchant to purchase 6,000 Antwerp *viertelen* of wheat (about 462,000 liters or 13,110 US bushels) on his behalf at the Antwerp grain market.⁵⁷

The grain trade in the Low Countries underwent a significant shift toward the end of the fifteenth century. Farmers in the northern parts of Brabant increasingly began to favor animal husbandry and dairying over grain cultivation. When grain prices in Brabant and Holland increased as a result of an overall decrease in supply, the Baltic grain supplied by Hanse merchants became more important for Antwerp. Once grain prices stabilized around 1500, Antwerp received the right to institute a transit trade in grain.⁵⁸ With the development of transit trades for both English cloth and Baltic grain in Antwerp, and the presence of so many German merchants, the stage was set for new international commercial networks.

The Early Trade with Southern Germany

It is rather difficult to say when South German merchants first came to Antwerp in any numbers, but it was probably sometime in the last quarter of the fourteenth century and most definitely by the early years of the fifteenth century.⁵⁹ Drawn to the city by the English cloth trade, the great South German firms began doing business in Antwerp by the last quarter of the fifteenth century; first the Meuting firm, and then the Hochstetters in 1486.⁶⁰

South German merchants (particularly from Nuremberg) found that the Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom fairs fitted into the cycle of the Frankfurt fairs quite well, allowing them to conduct a lively trade

⁵⁶ Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. 2, 175, nos. 3408 and 3411.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 175, no. 3412.

⁵⁸ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 120.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

⁶⁰ Hans van Werveke, *Bruges et Anvers: huit siècles de commerce flamand*, (Brussels: Editions de la Librairie Encyclopédique, 1944), 54. (Originally published as *Brugge en Antwerpen. Acht eeuwen Vlaamse handel*, (Ghent, 1941)).

between the two fair centers. Frankfurt was home to a harvest fair dating to the twelfth century, but when Emperor Louis of Bavaria granted the city a Lenten fair in 1330, Frankfurt became a multi-fair city. Frankfurt's Lenten fair was probably the most important for trade with Antwerp because of its focus on commercial products.⁶¹

At the Brabant fairs, South Germans could sell the metals which were already forming a large part of their business, buy and sell spices and other wares sold by Italians and merchants from Bruges, and obtain English woolen products for subsequent sale at Frankfurt's Lenten fair. The volume of metals South German merchants imported into Antwerp during the fifteenth century is fairly difficult to establish. It is likely, however, that sizable quantities of copper were starting to come into the city.

The specifics remain a bit unclear, but in addition to metals, South Germans also sent some spices to Antwerp during the fifteenth century. Before the Portuguese spice ships first began arriving in Antwerp just after the turn of the sixteenth century, Venetian merchants bringing spices into Europe from the Levant dominated the spice trade with German cities. In the Low Countries the Italian merchants in Bruges had largely dominated the spice trade during the fourteenth century and for a good part of the fifteenth century by sending their wares north by sea. But by the fifteenth century some South German merchants, particularly those from Nuremberg, began bypassing the Bruges merchants by purchasing spices in Italian cities and bringing them northward through the Brenner pass and from there to northern Europe (including Antwerp). Antwerp merchants also bought spices in Germany, most often in Bonn, and sent them north along the same routes the Germans used.

The fact that Germans were involved in importing spices into Antwerp did not stop the Italians from sending spices to the Low Countries by sea. That a Genoese merchant, for instance, is known to have sent spices to Antwerp, and from there to Bruges serves as testimony that the Italians remained important suppliers for the Antwerp market throughout the fifteenth century.⁶² But South German

⁶¹ For more on the Frankfurt fairs see: Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, vol. 1, (Frankfurt: Verlag von Hermann Minjon, 1910), 37–38.

⁶² Stadarchief Antwerpen (hereafter abbreviated as SAA), Certificatieboek 2, 13 April 1492, f° 116. The Genoese merchant Jan de Casina made a declaration for sixteen sacks of spices he was sending overland from Antwerp to Bruges.

merchants exploiting the overland routes proved to be active competitors for the Italians in Bruges.

The South Germans quickly adapted to new commercial realities, however, because by the first decade of the sixteenth century Portuguese seafaring merchants were bringing spices directly to Antwerp. After about 1503 there is only one record of a South German merchant sending spices to Antwerp from Germany;⁶³ rather South Germans sent spices purchased in Antwerp not only to southern and eastern Germany, but even to Italy on occasion. South German fustian cloth, which included both linen and cotton fibers in its weave, was Antwerp's other important import product from southern Germany. Although fustians were most commonly associated with Ulm, this type of cloth was produced in various towns of southern and western Germany during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Antwerp and the Wider World

Henri Pirenne once wrote, regarding Antwerp during the sixteenth century, "... the Netherlands constitute but the suburb of this marvelous city ..."⁶⁴ If Pirenne's observation was true, then Antwerp played a tremendous role in the economic life of both the Low Countries and Europe. Antwerp's place in Europe's economic life, however, was by no means assured. Without the kind of industrial base enjoyed by Flemish towns such as Bruges and Ghent, or even other Brabant towns like Leuven and Mechelen, everything depended on foreign merchants and their trade. As circumstance would have it, Antwerp did grow into a trade capital during the early years of the sixteenth century thanks to the foreign merchants who came to the city in droves.

While the picture of Antwerp's trade with Germany at the dawn of the fifteenth century was one of a prosperous regional market supplying not-too-distant neighbors with the products of the hinterland along with some luxury goods being traded by foreign merchants at its fairs, by the end of the fifteenth century the picture

⁶³ The Antwerp merchant Jan van Rijsschel imported 3 bales of spices from Cologne on 4 August 1507. Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. 2, 247, no. 1704.

⁶⁴ "... les Pay-Bas ne constituent pour ainsi dire que la banlieue de cette merveilleuse cité ..." Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, vol. 2, (Brussels: La Renaissance du Livre, 1948), 156.

had changed considerably. For the most part, Antwerp was at the mercy of the great political and economic forces which were shaping the era, but these same circumstances served to put Antwerp in a unique position by the close of the fifteenth century.

The physical growth of the city was phenomenal. Antwerp's population rose from about 40,000 around 1500 to over 90,000 by about 1560; next to Paris, Antwerp was the largest city north of the Alps. Local and foreign merchants financed much of the city's expansion. Germans, for instance were heavily involved in land speculation in the *Nieuwestad* (a section of the city north of the center opened up for expansion in the 1560s),⁶⁵ and foreign merchants invested in municipal *rentes* sold to finance various construction projects as much and as often, if not more, than the landed classes.

The city's tremendous growth, already evident in the fifteenth century, was made possible by a convergence of merchants with merchandise from disparate places in need of a central location to trade. The dominance of Bruges merchants at the fairs of Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom slowly decreased, particularly as Antwerp moved more and more away from dependence on the fair cycle in favor of a year-round permanent market. Cologne's disputes with the Hanse, and occasional trading disputes with Antwerp itself were not long-lasting. The efforts of the Flemish cloth producing towns threatened Antwerp's cloth finishing and transshipment business for a time, but eventually their protectionist measures proved ineffective. In the long run, these negative forces only strengthened Antwerp's commercial position.

The market for English cloth, in particular, continued to grow in southern and central Europe. The reluctance of cities like Bruges to allow English cloth imports into the Low Countries forced the principal parties to look elsewhere for a distribution center. Antwerp, with its favorable geographic location and deep port (compared to Bruges), was an obvious choice. Antwerp's city council was developing policies that put trade above most other concerns, although these policies would not come to full fruition until the sixteenth century.⁶⁶ Foreign merchants had been coming to the city long before 1484 when Maximilian ordered that all foreign merchants move their

⁶⁵ P. Génard, *Verzameling van Oorkonden gekend onder den naam van Stadsprotocollen*, edited by J. Pauwels, (Antwerp: De Backer, n.d.). See particularly the entries for July 1561, pages 161–176.

⁶⁶ An Kint, 'The Community of Commerce,' 252–253.

operations from Bruges to Antwerp, but by the closing decades of the fifteenth century, Antwerp's trade was becoming much more international in nature than it had been previously.

By the sixteenth century Antwerp's prosperity became less and less focused on the products of the Low Countries, and more and more on goods originating in very distant lands. To be sure, Antwerp's markets continued to provide an outlet for the products of the Low Countries—a by-product of the city's new found status may have been an increase in consumption of the products of the Low Countries in other parts of Europe—but the city's trade became truly international because most of the goods entering the city were ultimately transhipped to some other city rather than consumed in Antwerp. In this sense the Antwerp of the sixteenth century might be called a gateway city. Trade items funneled into the city by the sea-borne traders, first by the German Hanse and English merchants and later by merchants from the Spanish and Portuguese empires, were bought and sold both among these groups and by the land-based trading networks of the South Germans, eastern Europeans, and, increasingly, the Italians.

By the first decade of the sixteenth century, the once important Venetian merchant galleys had become less frequent on the sea lanes between the Mediterranean and the North Sea ports of the Low Countries. As the Venetian fleet of round ships slowly displaced the merchant galleys as the principal cargo ships within the Mediterranean, galley voyages into the Atlantic became more and more rare.⁶⁷ Indeed the last mention of Venetian galleys by an anonymous Antwerp chronicler reported that only two had called at Antwerp in 1508.⁶⁸ Venetian galleys may have called at Antwerp after this, but the frequency of their appearance in the Low Countries was certainly decreasing.⁶⁹ Even the Italian merchant towns began to look to Antwerp

⁶⁷ Lane has indicated that between 1509–39 Venice discontinued all westward galley voyages. F.C. Lane, 'Venetian Shipping During the Commercial Revolution,' in *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 15.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, *Chronycke van Antwerpen sedert het jaer 1500 tot 1575*, (Antwerp: J.P. van Dieren, 1845), 3. This is the published version of the handwritten manuscript in the Stadsarchief Antwerpen.

⁶⁹ Paola Subacchi, 'Italians in Antwerp in the Second half of the Sixteenth Century,' in *Minderheden in Westeuropese steden (16de–20ste eeuw)*, edited by Hugo Soly and Alfons Thijs, (Brussels: Brepols, 1995), 78.

as a gateway connecting seaborne trade with Europe's long-distance trade networks.

In its role as a gateway city to and from the interior of continental Europe, Antwerp attracted not only merchants, but a variety of other workers who built up a considerable infrastructure oriented toward the import and export business. Colonies of non-merchant Italians, Germans, Spaniards, and immigrants from other parts of the Low Countries contributed to the commercial life of the city through their artisanal activities. The city grew quickly as people from various parts of Europe with the skills to add value to the products entered the city daily. Sugar refiners, soap makers, cloth finishers, knife makers, packers, teamsters and so on flocked to the city in search of opportunity.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Antwerp, a city on the edge of the Holy Roman Empire, had become the undisputed European entrepôt for the western world's most important trade goods. The Portuguese sent pepper and spices from Asia, and sugar from the Atlantic. Italians sold silks, spices, and traded in financial instruments. English merchants sold their valuable cloth in their own marketplace within the city. Spanish merchants offered their Marino wool and wines and other high value goods. Hanseatic merchants as well as Dutch shippers brought bulk goods such as timber, grain, and iron from the Baltic. For their part, the South Germans sold copper, silver, and various other metals, and textiles. People from Brabant and other areas of the Low Countries often added value to these products before they were again traded and exported. There was really no product of any importance for the early modern period that could not be procured in this city on the Scheldt River.

Although merchants from all parts of northern, southern, central, and eastern Europe came to Antwerp to purchase the goods available in its markets, Antwerp's rise to such commercial prominence in Europe did not happen overnight, and the city's almost total dependence on commerce (in particular the long-distance wholesale trade of the foreign merchants) rather than on industry, made its continued dominance quite tenuous. In the mean-time, however, foreign merchants came to the city in great numbers creating a new dynamic and affecting the city's commercial development.

CHAPTER THREE

ANTWERP'S FOREIGN MERCHANT COMMUNITIES

It would be hard to imagine trade relations functioning in any period of history without the merchant arriving in the urban center with his trade goods on market day. Indeed, cities routinely instituted market days to facilitate trade between merchants who were residents of the city and those who came from other places, usually from the surrounding region. While looking for higher prices and new markets, some merchants struck out for towns farther and farther from their own. In distant cities, merchants traded the goods they brought with them for goods which they judged were in short enough supply in their hometown to fetch a high price. The successful merchant might accumulate enough excess capital to be able to afford to stay in place and send partners, or factors and agents to do business on his behalf, perhaps establishing branch offices in the most important trading centers. Eventually, many large merchants and merchant family firms diversified their operations to include banking and currency exchange.

The popular conception of the early modern merchant conjures up images of the individualistic entrepreneur set on making his fortune. Early merchant groups, however, were not much different from other occupational groups in a city, such as the artisans' guilds. Like the artisans, merchants formed sworn associations for their mutual benefit. In many respects the merchant association was a corporate body operating within but separate from the corporation of the city. Membership in the corporate body was voluntary and governance was by consent of the membership.¹ Within the guild structure, the merchant could count on strength in numbers, perhaps winning some privileges from the town, such as freedom from gate tolls and various legal protections. As long as membership in the guild decreased the costs of doing business, merchants would benefit by forming these kinds of associations.

¹ Anthony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present*, (London: Methuen and Co., 1984), 149.

Foreign merchants from a given area often formed trading associations among themselves in market towns, much like they did in their home city. Sometimes these were loose associations; at other times they were more formal. In order to obtain the most favorable position possible in the marketplace vis-à-vis the local merchants (and perhaps more importantly other foreign merchants), alien merchant groups routinely appealed for privileges in the various commercial centers they frequented. Rulers often granted privileges to those merchant groups deemed to be particularly important for the wealth of the town. Privileges might include reduced tolls and taxes, freedom from local jurisdiction in some legal matters, the right to own real estate, and so forth.

The real key to understanding why these merchant associations (or what were known in Antwerp as trading *nations*) developed and how they functioned in the early modern economy lay in their potential ability to decrease transaction costs. Long-distance trade was an expensive and risky proposition. Some of the costs involved were quite straight-forward and often measurable. Tolls, transport fees, storage rents, finishing costs, and packing fees, among others were charged wherever merchants met to engage in exchange. Sources exist for many of these kinds of fees allowing for some quantification of these costs. The costs involved in enforcing property rights are less obvious. Certainly in an era of a still-emerging central state, the whims of rulers need to be taken into account. Seizure of a merchant's goods, taxation, privateering, warfare, and the like all contributed to transaction costs. Often the sources required to measure these kinds of costs do not exist. To complicate the issue, political institutions could increase transaction costs (taxes and seizures) or decrease costs (formal exchanges and merchant law codes).

Economic Functions of Foreign Nations

Bearing in mind the potential role of transaction costs in long-distance trade, we could say that foreign merchant associations developed during the Middle Ages in order to 1) enforce property rights in the absence of a strong political institution willing to be the enforcer, 2) minimize the impact some fees and taxes had on commerce, and 3) decrease the costs involved in obtaining information.

Even though merchant associations were institutions intended to

enhance commerce, they also served to strengthen socially the foreign merchant community. The social benefits of merchant associations were the creation of enclaves of foreigners within a city on one hand, and the development of a measure of loyalty to the foreign community on the other.

With the establishment of the fair cycle in Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom and with increasing numbers of foreign merchants coming to Antwerp during the course of the sixteenth century, foreign merchants generated a great deal of wealth for the region, so much in fact that the Duke of Brabant and Antwerp's elite found it expedient to cater to their needs, and to react positively to their requests for privileges in order to attract even more merchants. These foreigners were ordinarily granted significant privileges, such as exemption from taxes and tolls. By the fifteenth century Maximilian of Austria decreed that the privileges foreign merchants had customarily enjoyed in Bruges would also be honored in Antwerp. Chief among the privileges Maximilian granted the merchants was an exemption from the tax on beer (a regularly consumed beverage in sixteenth-century Antwerp) provided the beer was for the consumption of the foreigners in the nation's house.² The beer tax exemption was a seemingly small privilege, but one that set these foreign merchant communities apart from the rest of the city's population.

Official recognition of most trading nations included a grant of various privileges. These privileges were not uniform across trading nations, however, reflecting each foreign merchant association's particular needs and interests. Once granted, the foreign merchant associations jealously guarded their privileges, and renegotiated them with each subsequent ruler.³ It was the trading nation that formed the heart of Antwerp's relationship with its various foreign merchant communities. The nation offered the city a mechanism through which to interact with merchant groups on the legal, political, and social levels. A nation's privilege to police its own members' conduct allowed it to regulate the activities of its members. In many respects the trading nation was the structure that held Antwerp's commercial organization together.

The need to guarantee enforcement of property rights formed the

² SAA, Privilegiekamer 1012, *Handel en Scheepvaart, 1464–1610*, loose sheet dated 30 June 1488.

³ F. Suykens, et al., *Antwerp: a Port for all Seasons*, 59.

basis for many of these privileges. The English merchants received privileges as early as 1296 from the Duke of Brabant. Although they received additional privileges in 1305 and 1315, the English privileges did not include lower taxes and fees until the fifteenth century. These privileges gave the English merchants rights of free assembly and freedom of jurisdiction while they were trading at the fairs of Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom.⁴ Taken together, these privileges laid the foundation for secure property rights.

Privileges did not eliminate disputes from erupting between the city and the English merchant community. Indeed, the merchants of the English Nation left Antwerp in 1457 for Bruges, vowing not to return because the weigh master at the Antwerp beam insulted an English merchant by calling him a liar. The English merchants in Antwerp considered the insult an offense against the entire English Nation.⁵ The importance of Antwerp for English trade could not be taken lightly, however, and the English soon returned.

The privileges Philip of Burgundy (son of Maximilian of Austria) granted to the Genoese Nation in 1501 were concerned almost exclusively with issues of property rights.⁶ The privileges spelled out the expectations the Genoese had regarding the security of their goods, and their ability to import and export merchandise unhindered. Like those of other merchant nations that had operated for years in Bruges, the Genoese privileges in Antwerp were based on the early privileges granted to the community in Bruges, and subsequently reconfirmed by the later Dukes of Burgundy.

In keeping with the Genoese use of sea transport, the early privileges focused on insuring that all Genoese ships visiting the Low Countries would be governed by the privileges, and on insuring safety and free movement of the Genoese and their merchandise within the Low Countries (particularly during times of war). By the mid-sixteenth century, however, the Genoese were using the sea-routes to Italy much less frequently than they had when they first came to Antwerp. Most Genoese and other Italian groups, like the Venetians and Florentines, found the overland routes to be both safer and less

⁴ Oskar de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie*, vol. 1, 86–87.

⁵ Floris Prims, 'Hoe de Engelschen ons Verlieten in 1457,' *Antwerpensia* 1936, vol. 10 (Antwerp: De Vlijt, 1937), 112.

⁶ SAA, Priviliegiekamer 1075, *Handelen Scheepvaart*, Natie van Genua, "Le troisième privilege de l'an 1501."

costly.⁷ Nevertheless, the basic principles the privileges set out concerning property rights still held regardless of whether the Genoese used sea routes or land routes.

The Portuguese had enjoyed substantial privileges in Bruges since the fourteenth century. The Emperor Maximilian granted the Portuguese a new set of privileges in 1493 based on the old ones. As part of these privileges, Portuguese merchants operating out of Bruges enjoyed an exemption from the wine and beer assize. Maximilian recognized these same privileges for the Portuguese merchants who had moved to Antwerp, and the privileges were reconfirmed in Antwerp in 1498.⁸ Charles V reconfirmed Antwerp's Portuguese merchant nation in its privileges in 1553.⁹ While cheaper beer may have been a boon to the nation, the Portuguese were most concerned with rules governing maritime commerce. Echoing the Genoese concern with setting forth clear property rights, the Portuguese privileges concerned things like the nation's freedom to load and unload its ships at times of its own choosing (even festival days), and where ships might be moored.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, if not earlier, merchants of the Hanseatic League guarded their property rights by claiming Imperial protection.¹⁰ Merchant property was most vulnerable, however, during periods of war. Even in cities as favorable to trade as Antwerp, reprisals might be directed toward merchants. The Hanse merchants were careful to insist on clauses in their privileges that prohibited reprisals against its merchants even in the event of war with a Hanse city.

The Hanseatic traders' significant presence in Antwerp during the fifteenth century certainly aided them in obtaining more favorable privileges than other foreign merchants. The League was most successful in gaining exemptions from various fees, or at least lower fees than were usually assessed by the authorities. The privileges the Duke of Brabant extended to the League in 1315 in Bruges included provisions for lower tolls than other merchants had to pay. The lower toll rates were subsequently recognized in Antwerp as well. These Hanse privileges were reconfirmed in 1409.¹¹

⁷ For example, SAA, Certificatieboek 5, f° 1, November 1542.

⁸ Hans Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen*, 26.

⁹ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1070, *Natie van Portugaal I*, 27 January 1553.

¹⁰ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1063, *Oosterlingen I*, 10 February 1545.

¹¹ Copies of both privileges are found in SAA, Privilegiekamer 1063, *Oosterlingen I*. 28 October 1315, and 30 April 1409.

The *schepenen* (aldermen) of Antwerp granted the Hansards, who had begun to frequent Antwerp's fairs and markets, a house on the *Koornmarkt* in 1468.¹² Certainly the Hanse continued to maintain its other principal office in the Low Countries at Bruges, but Antwerp's magistrates likely saw the presence of a Hanse establishment in Antwerp as one way to attract other foreign merchants to their city. In conjunction with the grant of the house as a permanent establishment, Hanse privileges were once again reconfirmed in 1468.¹³ The privileges the ruler granted the Hansards in Antwerp concerned a standardized rate for both the water and the land tolls; Hansards not only sent their goods to and from Antwerp by water, but they also used the over-land routes.

Although not usually part of their privileges, foreign merchant nations employed a variety of methods to decrease the costs involved in obtaining information about other merchants, business trends, and prices, among other things. Privileges giving the nation jurisdiction over its own merchants allowed for regulation of individual merchants and, indeed, some nations kept lists of their merchants, such as the Spanish who compiled separate lists for married and unmarried merchants.¹⁴ Other merchant groups, like the Hanseatic League, were much less inclined to keep these kinds of lists, preferring instead to guard the privacy of merchants claiming Hanse affiliation.

Even in the absence of such membership lists, identification with a merchant nation was necessary if a foreign merchant was to operate in Antwerp. In virtually all commercial documents kept in Antwerp, merchants are identified by their nation, or at the very least, their place of origin; this in itself associated the individual merchant with a group of other merchants. Antwerp merchants developed a fairly simple method of introducing new foreign merchants to the larger commercial community. High status merchants routinely vouched for the character and town of origin of newcomers before the city aldermen, who made the declaration a matter of public record by issuing a certificate outlining the particulars. These kinds of declarations were made by members of most of the foreign nations with the Portuguese,

¹² Ibid., the agreement is dated 4 May 1468.

¹³ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1062, *Oosterlingen. Privilegiën*. "Register gecopieerd einde XVIde eeuw uit zeeckeren boeck in rooden leere gebonden berustende onder den secretaris van den hanse in 't Oostershuyts" (1315-1573).

¹⁴ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1079, *Spaansche Natie*, "Relacion delos españoles que ay cassados enesta villa de Anvers a 8 febrero de 1560."

Italians, and South Germans being the most likely to identify new merchants this way.¹⁵ Occasionally a string of association was presented to situate a foreigner in the relationship structure of the foreign merchant community. On 21 October 1542, Francisco de Pierro, merchant of Venice, and Jan de la Faille, merchant of Antwerp, both well-known in Antwerp's commercial community, together declared that they had long known the Venetian merchant "Mathys" Verge. About a month later Pierro and Verge swore that they both knew well Stephano de Miole and his son Mathieu.¹⁶

Merchants developed a number of institutions to facilitate tracking business trends and prices. Italian cities and some German cities, like Augsburg, may have had price currents during the sixteenth century, but the most well-known was the Antwerp price current which was likely the oldest financial periodical in the world.¹⁷ Merchant newsletters sent between branch offices could also keep partners and factors informed about market trends. The Fugger firm of Augsburg routinely sent news back and forth between its branch offices through the use of newsletters.¹⁸

Social Functions of Foreign Nations

In almost all cases, foreign merchant groups went beyond the typical economic associations, like the guild structure so evident in the foreign nations of Antwerp, to create social structures that they found familiar as a way to carve out a niche for themselves in strange cities. In a very real sense, merchants created communities in the foreign places where they did business. In order to understand how foreign merchants operated and participated in the social life of a city like Antwerp, the discussion must move beyond the economic functions to examine more closely the social, or community-building, functions

¹⁵ For example, the Portuguese merchant Salvator Fenix vouched for several other Portuguese newcomers in 1542, and a number of south German merchants vouched for Sebastian Polner the new factor for the Lucas Rem Company. SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 28 August 1542 f° 19 and 23 February 1542 f° 9.

¹⁶ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 21 Oct. 1542, f° 38 and 24 Nov. 1542, f° 48.

¹⁷ John J. McCusker and Cora Gravensteijn, *The Beginnings of Commercial and Financial Journalism* (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1991), 85.

¹⁸ For some examples see Victor von Klarwill, et al., *The Fugger News-Letters*, 2 vols., (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926).

of these associations. The most important aspect for the merchant association—commercial advantage or forming a cohesive community—depended on the values of the particular foreign merchant group, but both were present in most of Antwerp's foreign merchant nations.

The sixteenth-century European idea of 'merchant community,' while it in fact referred to both local and foreign merchants, is generally associated more with foreign merchant groups than local merchants.¹⁹ Indeed, some of the most interesting accounts from the early modern period described the non-European places in which European merchants conducted their business. The well-known description by Jan Huyghen van Linschoten of the isthmus city of Portuguese Goa, for instance, with its portrayal of pleasant houses, well-maintained gardens and many churches and religious houses, all within the walls of a European colony on the Indian subcontinent, is one of the better-known examples. Linschoten described Goa as being somewhat hilly and a lot like Lisbon. Goa was inhabited, however, not only by Portuguese Christians, but by Indians, Jews, Armenians, and others. The Portuguese welcomed these groups in Goa but prohibited them from practicing their "superstitious and devilish inventions," except privately in their homes or on the "firm land."²⁰ The Europeans in Goa developed a place familiar to them, and one similar to what they were used to in Portugal. In essence, the Portuguese merchants in Goa, as described by Linschoten, had created a merchant community in order to build solidarity and loyalty to each other as Portuguese Christians.

However, Europeans did not need to leave Europe to feel foreign. While in a strange town, both permanent and transient merchants went to great lengths to combat the feeling of being outsiders by living in close proximity to one another. They even changed their environment to make it more like home, not too unlike the Portuguese Linschoten described in Goa who fashioned that city after Lisbon. The Genoese merchants who took up residence in Seville during the sixteenth century, for instance, reconstructed the Santa Maria quarter

¹⁹ Frédéric Mauro, 'Merchant Communities, 1350–1750,' in *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350–1750*, edited by James D. Tracy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 285.

²⁰ Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, *The Voyage to the Indies* (New York, 1970). The volume used is a reprint of the Hakluyt society edition of 1884, which followed closely the English edition of 1598.

where they lived along familiar lines by building what were essentially Genoese villas.²¹ The foreign merchants of most late medieval and early modern European cities approached the ruler requesting privileges and recognition as a group apart. Even those merchants who were denied or failed to seek recognition tended to gravitate toward each other.²²

Although many of the types of places that merchants frequented in trading towns within Europe were familiar to them, the towns and their inhabitants could often feel quite foreign to merchants. Not only language, but customs, manners, and culture were very different from south to north, and east to west. Of course there were some commonalities in both merchant experience and trading places from town to town, but from the point of view of the merchant the foreignness of the town likely overrode the familiarity of the places of commerce once the trading day was over.

European society in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also looked with suspicion on foreigners. Foreign merchants were outsiders.²³ Even at home the merchant who went abroad to trade was viewed with suspicion. The sixteenth-century Brabant neo-stoic Justus Lipsius wrote in 1584 in his book *De Constantia*, (which he dedicated to the city of Antwerp):

See how every day some for anger, some for love, some for ambition forsake their country? And what a multitude are drawn away by that idol Lucre? How many Italians forsaking Italy the Queen of countries only for greed of gain have removed their dwellings into France, Germany, yea even into Sarmatia? How many thousand Spaniards doth ambition draw daily into another world from us vs: these arguments prove invincibly that the band whereby we are linked thus to our country is but external and accidental, in that it is so easily broken by one inordinate lust.²⁴

²¹ Ruth Pike, *Enterprise and Adventure: The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 12.

²² For example, some German merchants in Antwerp who did not have official recognition lived very near each other. Lazarus Tucher who came to Antwerp as a merchant from Nuremberg obtained a house in 1535 next to the house occupied by the firm of Mathias Manlich, an Augsburg merchant. See SAA, Schepenbrieven 187, 1535, fo. 737v–738.

²³ Kathryn L. Reyerson, 'The Merchants of the Mediterranean: Merchants as Stangers,' in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, edited by F.R.P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 2.

²⁴ Justus Lipsius, *Two Books of Constancie*, trans. John Stradling (London, 1594), 97. I have modernized the spelling of this selection.

Lipsius suggested in this passage that merchants held little affection for their homelands, had little need for the fellowship of their compatriots, and were immune to a sense of place, or at the very least were rejecting the home they had known. But Lipsius's characterization seems to have been far from the norm.

It is difficult for the historian to understand the mentality of the stranger merchant. The whole idea of foreign merchant communities was based on "the principle of solidarity and mutual aid" among "isolated 'nationals' in a port or country that was sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile."²⁵ In one sense then Lipsius was misunderstanding the motivation of the merchant. Many merchants did, indeed, choose to remain in foreign cities often obtaining the status of burgher, and in some instances living out their lives there. But the vast majority of foreign merchants in any market town stayed only long enough to transact their business before returning to their homeland.

The foreign merchants in Antwerp ran the spectrum from members of the great sixteenth-century merchant families to small peddlers with a much more restricted trading area. Foreign merchants required a large number of support personnel often coming with them as servants, but in a growing city like Antwerp even tradesmen came from other areas of Europe. What developed out of the structure of the foreign merchant communities were often foreign communities in a much more general sense. Referring to foreign merchants, Braudel has pointed out that "We must imagine these groups with their kinship systems and friendships, their servants, correspondents, accounts and ledger clerks."²⁶ Even a cursory examination of the Antwerp *Poortersboeken* (citizenship roles) shows that there were large numbers of craftsmen of all types also moving into this city whose population more than doubled in less than 100 years.

Perhaps because of their long history as a privileged group in Antwerp, the English were the most closely knit group of merchants. An English quarter developed as the area where the English merchants lived and conducted their business.²⁷ Newly arrived Portuguese traders were welcomed at the House of the Portuguese nation on the *Kipdorp*

²⁵ Frédéric Mauro, 'Merchant Communities, 1350–1750,' 255.

²⁶ Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, vol. 2 of *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Centuries*, translated by Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 153

²⁷ Jacob Strieder, ed., *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven: Quellen zur Deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags, 1930), 162.

even though, in general, Portuguese merchants did not live in a distinct neighborhood.²⁸ The ways in which foreign merchant nations chose to organize themselves socially fall along two general lines. The northern merchant groups, in the case of Antwerp this was the English and the Hansards, tended to hold to a fairly isolationist policy in the city. The southern merchant groups, including the Italians and the Iberians, more often than not favored a looser accommodation within the city. This is not to suggest that the English and the Hansards eschewed interaction with other merchant groups; they certainly needed to come together with other merchants in order to conduct business. But the northern nations tended toward a greater degree of regulation than the southern nations. The following brief description of the various foreign nations and the places they established for themselves within Antwerp's commercial infrastructure illustrates this distinction.

Northern Merchant Nations: The Hansards and the English

The Hansards came to Antwerp to purchase the English wool and cloths that they found so much in demand in eastern markets and also to sell grain and other bulk goods. Hanse grain was very important to Antwerp's grain markets because French grain coming down the Scheldt from the grain staple at Ghent was priced 50% higher in Antwerp than at Ghent by the end of the fourteenth century.²⁹

In 1468, the Hanse merchants obtained a house on the *Oude Koornmarkt*, called *De Cluyse*. This house was to remain as the base for Hansards in Antwerp for 100 years. By the early sixteenth century, the Hansards' presence in Antwerp had grown to such an extent (indeed, by 1560 most of the remaining Hanse merchants in Bruges had moved to Antwerp) that they needed a new building in order to accommodate their commercial activities. The *Oosterhuis* was built in 1568 in the *Nieuwstad* section of Antwerp. The new Hanse establishment was immense. The ground floor was used to store merchandise while the second and third floors had room to house at least 300 merchants.³⁰ Hanse merchants in Antwerp were expected to focus their activities on the *Oosterhuis*.

²⁸ A. Goris, *Études sur les colonies marchandes méridionales*, 48.

²⁹ David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City, 1300–1500* (London: Longman, 1997), 41.

³⁰ Robert vande Weghe, *Geschiedenis van de Antwerpse Straatnamen*, 208–209.

Within only a few years, however, the Hanse presence in Antwerp seems to have peaked. With the increase in Dutch and English shipping in the Baltic, Hanse dominance of those markets fell. Because of events in Antwerp during the 1570s, most notably the persecution of German Protestants by Spanish troops, Hanse merchants had no choice but to leave Antwerp. Hanse shipping into Antwerp reached a high point around 1572 and declined rapidly thereafter.³¹

Although the English merchants gained their first privileges as early as 1296,³² they really only began coming to Antwerp in large numbers in the fifteenth century. Due to the ban on the import of English cloth by the market towns of Flanders in the fifteenth century, the English merchants had to look elsewhere for markets. In Antwerp, where no significant cloth industry had ever been established, they found a ready market for their cloths at the city's fairs. By 1474, the English had received permission from the magistrates to establish a house for their merchants on the *Bullinckstraat* near the *Hofstraat* where some merchants had organized an informal bourse in 1453. The rationale for the English request for their own 'house' was that the large number of English merchants coming to Antwerp needed space for their offices, warehouses, and lodgings.³³ By the time the English had established their house, only they and the Hansards had set up permanent offices in Antwerp.

The English merchants, and those who came to Antwerp to purchase their wool and the cloths they offered for sale, often met to conduct business on both the *Wolstraat* and the *Hofstraat*. Likely as a result of the informal Bourse established in 1453, the English were instrumental in establishing a public Bourse on the *Hofstraat* in 1485. The Merchant Adventurers, when conducting business amongst themselves, met in the courtyard of their house.³⁴ This was known as the *Engelse Pand*, or English market. Having out-grown their old headquarters, the English nation was given a new establishment in 1564 on *Prinsstraat* called the *Hof van Lier*. By 1579 the city had granted the English an additional thirty-eight warehouses in the vicinity of the *Hof van Lier*. The English house was the focal point for all English

³¹ J. Denucé, *La hanse et les compagnies commerciales anversoises aux pays baltiques*, (Antwerp: de Sikkels, 1938), xx.

³² Oskar de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen*, 86.

³³ Ibid., 128–29.

³⁴ Ibid., 130–31.

interaction in the city. In this house they could both conduct trade and be among their compatriots.

Southern Merchant Nations: Iberians and Italians

Merchants from southern Europe began extensive operations in Antwerp only after 1484, the symbolic watershed year for the Antwerp economy in its rise to world-wide prominence, when Maximilian of Austria recognized Antwerp as the commercial center of the Netherlands (in lieu of Bruges) and instructed all the foreign merchants residing in Bruges to relocate their operations to Antwerp. Maximilian's instructions were certainly not the catalyst that brought all the merchants trading in the southern Netherlands together in one place for the first time; merchants, both local and foreign, had been visiting the Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom fairs for over 100 years.³⁵ But it gave Antwerp a degree of legitimacy as an international market that it did not previously have due to the traditional position of Bruges as the focal point for foreign trade in the Netherlands. Most of the Bruges merchant offices moved to Antwerp for a time, but many moved back to Bruges when the political situation in Flanders stabilized. The Portuguese merchants, however, heeded the call and relocated their offices to Antwerp permanently. Bruges's more dominant Italian houses came later.³⁶

The first Portuguese shipment of Asian spices probably landed at Antwerp about 1503.³⁷ Likely due to this new destination for their principal product, Portuguese merchants began visiting Antwerp in fairly large numbers in the early years of the sixteenth century. These spices proved to be so attractive to merchants, particularly the Germans, that trade in them was brisk. Indeed, the Portuguese spice trade, along with English cloth, and southern German metals formed the foundation upon which Antwerp's economy rested.

Within decades the Portuguese further solidified their important place in the Antwerp economy by importing Atlantic sugar into the city. Initially Portuguese sugar came from Atlantic islands such as

³⁵ C. Sloomans, *Paas- en Koudemarkten te Bergen op Zoom, 1365–1565*, vol. 1, (Tilburg: Stichting Zuidelijk Historisch Contact, 1985), 8–13.

³⁶ Jan Albert Goris, *Études sur les colonies marchandes méridionales*, 38, 75.

³⁷ Herman van der Wee, *The Low Countries in the Early Modern World*, translated by Lizabeth Fackelman (Aldershot (UK), 1993), 94.

Madeira and São Tomé. By the end of the sixteenth century, however, Brazilian sugar sources became much more important. Concurrent with the huge amount of sugar coming into Antwerp, enterprising merchants set up sugar refineries in Antwerp that were soon producing more refined sugar than Venice, which had been Europe's premier sugar market in the fifteenth century. Much of this sugar eventually ended up in German market towns.³⁸

The Portuguese in Antwerp were a small but influential group during the sixteenth century. In 1511 Antwerp recognized how important the spice trade was to the town's continued economic growth, and offered the Portuguese a house on the *Kipdorp* that the city had purchased from the nobleman Giles de Schermere.³⁹ This house was listed by Guiciardini fifty years later as one of the most important places in Antwerp.⁴⁰ Even though many Portuguese merchants and shippers visited Antwerp, the nation's permanent residents were surprisingly few. In 1526 Rodrigo Fernandes, the factor of the King of Portugal and head of the Portuguese nation, swore that only eight Portuguese merchants were residents of Antwerp.⁴¹ Despite their small numbers, based on the number of times they appear in municipal records, the resident Portuguese seem to have been much more a part of the greater Antwerp community than either the Hansards or the English.

As early as the opening years of the fourteenth century, Genoese merchant ships had arrived in Flemish ports.⁴² Venetian ships had already been traveling to the North Sea for some time prior to 1314 when the commune began to regulate galley voyages to the north.⁴³ About one hundred years later, despite the fact that the Genoese had tried to force Florentine merchants to use Genoese ships for their nascent trade with Flanders and England, the galleys of Florence

³⁸ Donald J. Harreld, 'Atlantic Sugar and the Antwerp Market in the Sixteenth Century,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 7 (2003): 148–163.

³⁹ Hans Pohl, *Die Portugiesen in Antwerpen*, 26; V. Vásquez de Prada, *Lettres Marchandes d'Anvers* (Paris, S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963), 158; Jan Albert Goris, *Études sur les colonies marchandes méridionales*, 38.

⁴⁰ Ludovico Guiciardini, *The Description of the Low Countries* (London, 1593), (reprinted Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976), 32.

⁴¹ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1070, *Natie van Portugaal I*, 26 November 1526.

⁴² Rudolf Häpke, *Brügges Entwicklung zum mittelalterlichen Weltmarkt* (Berlin: Karl Curtius, 1908), 155–156.

⁴³ Frederic C. Lane, 'Venetian Merchant Galleys, 1300–34: Private and Communal Operations,' *Speculum* 38 (1963): 180.

finally began making the trip by about 1425.⁴⁴ Perhaps because of their long-standing relationship with Bruges, the principal commercial city in Flanders, the Italians were somewhat slower to begin operations in Antwerp.

The Genoese were one early group to move offices from Bruges to Antwerp. It is uncertain exactly when the bulk of the Genoese merchants transferred to Antwerp, but the *maior domus* officially remained in Bruges until 1522.⁴⁵ The Genoese nation occupied a house near the old Bourse. As a result of a considerable contribution to the Dominicans they were able to claim for themselves a place in the choir of St. Paul's church by 1528 giving them an even greater level of solidarity, and also greater visibility in the city. The Genoese colony in Antwerp comprised almost half of all Italians living in the city during the sixteenth century, and they were undoubtedly the most visible of the various Italian merchant nations.⁴⁶

Merchants from other Italian towns were also actively involved in Antwerp commerce. The Florentines, Venetians, and Lucchese were a few of the significant participants from a very early period. The Venetians, however, were probably the least active of all the Italian merchants in Antwerp. Of the twenty-eight Venetian merchants that Renee Doehaerd identified in the Antwerp *Certificatieboeken* and *Schepenbrieven* between the years 1490 and 1514, most (twelve) were active in the city in the last decade of the fifteenth century. For the records entered between 1510 and 1514, only four Venetians appear to have spent much time in Antwerp.⁴⁷

Like merchants from other places, Italian merchants often became burghers of Antwerp. Some members of the Affaitadi family of Cremona were notable examples. The Affaitadi had interests in international banking and commerce. The family made loans to the Portuguese crown as well as to other governments in sixteenth-century Europe. By 1551 they had purchased a house in Antwerp called the "Suikerhuis" on the *Predikerinnenstraat* in partnership with the Balbani,

⁴⁴ Michael E. Mallett, *The Florentine Galleys in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 82–83.

⁴⁵ Goris, *Études sur les colonies marchandes méridionales*, 77.

⁴⁶ Paola Subacchi, 'Italians in Antwerp in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century,' 77.

⁴⁷ Renée Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, 101.

a Lucchese merchant family.⁴⁸ As the name suggests the house was home to a modest sugar refinery.

It was not uncommon for non-native merchants to branch into various industries and, considering the influx of sugar thanks to the Portuguese, Italians probably found many opportunities in the Antwerp sugar industry. In December 1562 the Affaitadi had sufficient capital to add to their holdings a large house called "den Draeck" on the *Mutsaertstraat*, which was purchased from another Italian merchant only a block away from their Suikerhuis.⁴⁹

Of course in addition to these large merchant families who made up the highest levels of the Italian merchant community and controlled the bulk of the trade with Italy,⁵⁰ there were many small and medium-sized merchants as well as Italian factors, agents, transporters, and even artisans. While Italian merchants tended to remain permanently in Antwerp much less often than their factors and especially Italian craftsmen did, some Italians established themselves permanently in the city purchasing houses, often obtaining citizenship and in many cases marrying into the local Antwerp population, but these were not ordinarily merchants of any substance. Some estimates suggest that over 400 Italian families had at least one baby while living in Antwerp between 1560 and 1599,⁵¹ a time during which Antwerp's international economy was undergoing a period of crisis and foreigners were leaving the city in great numbers.

Spanish merchants also came to Antwerp, but only very slowly. Most Spanish groups continued to maintain official trade consulates in Bruges,⁵² but a Consulate of Aragon opened in Antwerp in 1527.⁵³ The numbers of most foreign merchant communities in Bruges

⁴⁸ J. Denucé, *Inventaire des Affaitadi banquiers italiens à Anvers de l'année 1568* (Antwerp: n.p., 1934), 64.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ W. Brulez, 'L'exportation des Pay-Bas vers l'Italie par voie de terre au milieu du XVI^e siècle,' *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (1959): 471.

⁵¹ Paola Subacchi, 'Italians in Antwerp in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century,' 84.

⁵² William Phillips, 'Local Integration and Long-Distance Ties: The Castilian Community in Sixteenth-Century Bruges,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 17 (1986): 33–48. See also: Raymond Fagel, 'Spanish Merchants in the Low Countries: *Stabilitas Loci* or *Peregrinatio*?' in *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure*, edited by Peter Stabel, et al. (Leuven: Garant, 2001), 87–104.

⁵³ V. Vásquez de Prada, *Lettres marchandes d'Anvers*, 161.



Map 1. Locations of Foreign Merchant Houses in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp

decreased in the first decade or so of the sixteenth century as merchants transferred their operations to Antwerp. The Spanish, however, remained in fairly large numbers owing to the presence of the Spanish wool staple in Bruges. As late as 1540 when most other merchant groups had left Bruges in favor of Antwerp, Charles V again designated Bruges the site of the staple for the Spanish Merino wool upon which the Flemish woolen textile centers had come to rely in the absence of, or perhaps even in preference to, English wool.⁵⁴ Spanish wool exports to Bruges increased from about 15,000 sacks at the turn of the sixteenth century to as much as 50,000 sacks by 1550.⁵⁵ Such a vibrant trade would have required a large number of Spanish merchants, both resident and occasional. Estimates of the numbers of Spanish merchants in Bruges are difficult to calculate, but there were probably about eighty permanent residents with another hundred or so merchants coming and going.⁵⁶

Despite the presence of the wool staple in Bruges, the Spanish could not ignore the many opportunities available in Antwerp. By the mid-sixteenth century there may have been about 200 Spaniards operating in Antwerp at any one time.⁵⁷ With the exception of the Consulate of Aragon, however, the Spanish had a difficult time organizing themselves due to opposition from the Spanish nation in Bruges. In October 1551 the Spanish Nation in Antwerp petitioned Charles V to establish a Spanish consulate in Antwerp. The next month the Consulate in Bruges voiced its opposition to any moves to establish a Spanish consulate in Antwerp.⁵⁸

The most visible of the Spanish merchants in Antwerp were the agents of the Habsburg rulers. These royal merchants represented the interests of the Spanish king in both the marketplace and in the Antwerp Bourse, and were forbidden to conduct any business other than for the king. While the king's agent was usually a Spaniard, occasionally natives of Antwerp were appointed, as in the case of the Antwerp merchant Gaspar Schetz who held the post from 1555

⁵⁴ William Phillips, 'Local Integration and Long-Distance Ties,' 35.

⁵⁵ Carla Rahn Phillips, 'The Spanish Wool Trade, 1500–1780,' *The Journal of Economic History* 42 (1982): 777–780.

⁵⁶ Raymond Fagel, 'Spanish Merchants in the Low Countries: *Stabilitas Loci* or *Peregrinatio*?,' 89–95.

⁵⁷ V. Vasquez de Prada, *Lettres marchandes d'Anvers*, 162.

⁵⁸ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1079, *Spaansche Natie*, documents dated October 1551 and 20 November 1551.

to 1561. There was also a small colony of Spaniards who were engaged in industrial activities, processing salt and making soap. As a whole, the activities of the Spanish merchant community were not as important for Antwerp's economy as were the activities of the Portuguese, the Italians, the Flemish, and the Germans.

In any event, most of Antwerp's foreign merchant nations enjoyed distinct and often very different kinds of commercial privileges depending on their particular set of motivations. Some of these foreign nations followed a pattern of isolation, in which the establishment of an enclave formed the basis for their interaction with the other merchants of the city. The English community and, to a lesser extent, the Hansards are good examples of this form of organization. Italian and Iberian merchants, while still determined to obtain privileges designed to decrease transaction costs, were much more fluid, even inclusive, in the way they interacted with other merchants and with officials in Antwerp. In general, and despite their different methods of organization, these foreign merchant nations sought and received privileges intended to secure property rights, to decrease taxes and fees in order to gain an advantage over other merchants, to make obtaining information easier, and to establish themselves as identifiable communities.

There were, however, exceptions to the model of foreign merchant organizations just presented. Not all the foreign merchant groups in Antwerp received privileges. Some merchant groups never enjoyed the kinds of privileges associated with the usual structure of one of Antwerp's foreign merchant nations. It is not clear if the city denied privileges to these groups or if they failed to ask for privileges in the first place. The Venetians, the Scandinavians, and most South Germans, among others did not possess any trading privileges in Antwerp, and yet they were regularly referred to as 'nations.' This raises the question of how the trading nation should be defined for the sixteenth century. Rather than securing privileges intended to decrease transaction costs, the primary reason for merchants to organize into nations, no matter how loosely, seems to have been to instill a sense of community in the members of the foreign merchant group. Furthermore, if decreasing transaction costs was no longer a concern for some merchant groups, what had changed in Antwerp's commercial structure?

Of all the merchant groups in Antwerp, the South Germans probably had the most important role to play in Antwerp's continued success despite the fact that they seem to have been the only significant group not accorded privileged status. An examination of their activ-

ities indicates that commercial techniques in Antwerp may have made privileges less necessary than in earlier centuries. Nevertheless, Antwerp's South German community held to the social aspects of the foreign merchant nation.

Because the South German merchants were never organized as a privileged trading nation, Antwerp's city archive does not contain a collection of official papers concerning them. Since so little detail remains about Antwerp's South German merchants as a group, a picture of the city's South German merchants had to be cobbled together from disparate collections of sources. Despite the dearth of studies on the Germans in Antwerp, and the scattered nature of the sources, there is sufficient evidence to begin to form some idea of who they were and how they operated both as businessmen and as residents of the city.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GERMANS IN ANTWERP

The South Germans came to Antwerp in great numbers in the opening years of the sixteenth century. While the metals and metal products they brought to Antwerp were not as spectacular as spices from the Orient, or fine English woollens, they were the principal distributors for Portuguese and English goods throughout central Europe. Their speculative activities at the Antwerp Bourse were also much more visible than those of the other merchant groups within the city. While the South Germans were never granted privileges like most trading nations in Antwerp, they succeeded in forming a significant community both of merchants and of immigrants in this burgeoning city on the Scheldt.

This chapter will look more closely at the variety of Germans who were active in Antwerp during the sixteenth century. Most of them were factors and agents of the great German firms operating in the city. But all of these Germans, regardless of their economic or social position, participated to one degree or another in the commercial and the social life of the city—they were part of the German community.

The great merchant firms from Augsburg and Nuremberg dominated the trade with Germany through their factors and agents. Merchants who would probably be counted among the wealthiest individuals in most other cities were commonplace among the ranks of Antwerp's mid-level merchants. Thousands of small-scale merchants and peddlers also came to Antwerp to participate in the German trade. Unfortunately very little has been written about the South German merchants in Antwerp and even less about the large number of small-scale merchants, mostly from Antwerp and the surrounding area, who participated in the trade with Germany. Some scholars have studied the Hansards,¹ but other North German merchant groups have suffered from the same lack of investigation as the South Germans. Merchants from

¹ See for instance P. Jeannin, 'Les relations économiques des villes de la Baltique avec Anvers au XVI^e siècle,' *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 43 (1956): 323–355.

Westphalia, the area around Cleves, and those merchants from Cologne and Aachen who, while some of them may have been Hansards, moved their goods overland rather than by sea have been similarly neglected.

There were also large numbers of German workers who migrated to Antwerp during the sixteenth century who have been largely ignored. Even though only a small percentage of these German immigrants were merchants, they too constituted part of the German community in Antwerp.

German Immigrants to Antwerp

By the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp had become not only a great northern European market town bringing together buyers and sellers, but a world entrepôt in its own right. Antwerp rather quickly came to be home, at least for a time, to Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Czechs, Danes, and most importantly, Germans. Some of these foreigners were not merchants at all; rather they came to the city in search of work.

The roads heading toward Antwerp were probably not choked with immigrants during the city's period of greatest growth, although they might have been later in the sixteenth century as thousands fled Antwerp for the northern Netherlands due to the upheaval of the Dutch Revolt. But Antwerp was still a growing city throughout most of the century and a steady stream of people flowed into the metropole. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Antwerp's population stood at roughly 100,000. With this kind of growth thousands of people each year must have flocked to the city;² perhaps thirty-five or forty immigrant families on average each week. Antwerp's growth as a center of trade and industry was so dramatic that people from all over Europe went there to make their fortunes. Antwerp became a city of immigrants; a city where those whose families had lived in the city for any length of time were clearly in the minority.

Until fairly recently scholars have held the view that Europeans were not particularly inclined to move around—at least not over very great distances—before the advent of extra-European colonization

² Based on population growth rates, An Kint has estimated that an average of about 2000 immigrants per year must have settled in Antwerp. See: An Kint, 'The Community of Commerce.'

and eventually industrialization. But migration to cities was fairly common in the pre-industrial period. Individuals and family groups moved into cities and even between cities in search of new opportunities.³ Significant migration was particularly evident in cities with rapidly growing populations. Due largely to periodic epidemics and endemic disease stemming from high population density, urban death rates tended to outpace birthrates in the late medieval and early modern city, so dramatic population growth depended on immigration.⁴ This is in no way meant to imply that cities simply could not count on a certain degree of natural increase. It is quite possible that the birth rates of permanent residents did, indeed, outpace death rates, while death rates were higher among the temporary populations (such as journeymen or servants, for instance) in some cities,⁵ but either way, *rapid* population growth was predicated on migration in the early modern city, and most migration to the cities originated from their hinterlands. This was also the case with Antwerp. Migration from the surrounding towns and villages fueled most of the city's growth.

Some estimates suggest that about 85% of Antwerp's immigrants came from areas very close to the city, and some of these were urban areas in their own right.⁶ In 1526, for instance, 20% of Antwerp's new citizens came from the nearby town of Mechelen, with another 12.4% coming into the town from Leuven.⁷ Many others, however, came to Antwerp from much greater distances wanting to participate in the economic boom that was in many respects the catalyst for the physical and demographic growth of the city.

By the middle of the sixteenth century scores of German workers (mostly from the northwest) had moved to Antwerp. This influx of Germans could only have strengthened the commercial ties between

³ Steve Hochstadt, 'Migration in Preindustrial Germany,' *Central European History* 16, no. 3 (1983): 204–5.

⁴ For an early discussion of the problem see J.C. Russell, 'Late Mediaeval Population Patterns,' *Speculum* 20 (1945): 157–171. A bit more technical discussion, and one that emphasizes the role of disease in migrations see William H. McNeill, 'Historical Patterns of Migration,' *Current Anthropology* 20 (1979): 95–102.

⁵ See the persuasive argument by Allan Sharlin, 'Natural Decrease in Early Modern Cities: A Reconsideration,' *Past and Present* 79 (1978): 126–138.

⁶ Hugo Soly, 'Social Relations in Antwerp in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' in *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis*, edited by Jan Van der Stock, (Antwerp: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1993), 38.

⁷ Bruno Blondé and Raymond van Uytven, 'De smalle steden en het Branbantse stedelijke netwerk in de Late Middeleeuwen en de Nieuwe Tijd,' *Lira Elegans* 6 (1996): 145.

Antwerp and Germany as well as the social ties among Germans in Antwerp. Proportionally few of the Germans living in Antwerp during this period were merchants. Various support personnel were required for the successful shipment of merchandise to German cities. Many of these were natives of Antwerp, especially the packers and warehousemen, but others, including the freight carriers themselves, tended to be Germans more often than natives of the Low Countries. For example, the overland freight carriers, in particular those transporters from the area around Hesse, were very important to the whole conduct of trade between Antwerp and the cities of Germany.

Despite the fact that many lived out their lives in the city, few German merchants or transporters became citizens of Antwerp. Since Antwerp was a city within the Holy Roman Empire, many Germans may not have perceived a need to obtain citizenship. Aside from the right to hold office, an exemption from certain tolls, and protection against foreign jurisdiction, there was likely little advantage to becoming a citizen for most German immigrants.⁸ The status of *ingezetene* or established resident, which merely required the individual to maintain continuous residence within Antwerp for one year, provided many of the same rights as citizens with the exception of protection against foreign jurisdiction and toll exemptions, but Nuremberg merchants already enjoyed toll exemptions anyway.⁹

Nevertheless, each year a fair number of Germans became citizens of Antwerp (except during periods of war when the number of immigrants dropped drastically). Immigrants could become Antwerp citizens by either marriage to another Antwerp citizen, or by purchasing citizenship. Because *ingezetenen* (established residents) enjoyed privileges nearly equal to those of citizens, far fewer immigrants actually purchased citizenship than actually came to Antwerp each year.¹⁰ While there were a variety of reasons why a newcomer to the city may

⁸ For more on Antwerp citizenship requirements and gradations see Alfons K.L. Thijs, 'Minderheden te Antwerpen (16de/20ste eeuw),' in *Minderheden in Westeuropese steden (16de–20ste eeuw)*, edited by Hugo Soly & Alfons K.L. Thijs, (Brussels: Brepols, 1995); and especially An Kint, 'Becoming Civic Community: Citizenship in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp,' in Marc Boone & Maarten Prak, *Individual, Corporate and Judicial Status in European Cities (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)*, (Leuven: Garant, 1996).

⁹ See discussion on tolls in the next chapter.

¹⁰ An Kint, 'Becoming Civic Community: Citizenship in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp,' 164–165.

have wanted citizenship, the most important reason to obtain citizenship was admittance to mastership in one of the various craft guilds in the city. But the citizenship requirement for mastership was often conveniently ignored in this fast growing city where skilled workers were very much in demand.¹¹

Scholars interested in medieval and early modern migration have long bemoaned not only the lack of sources, but the fact that immigrant families might avoid inclusion in various official records for a generation or more.¹² Lack of records is a problem for scholars interested in migration to Antwerp as well. Adding to the difficulty in accurately estimating immigration numbers is the fact that no records of *ingezetenen* were kept. The best the scholar can do is to scour the various registers of the city aldermen to find individuals who were identified as *ingezetenen* and make a guess.

The principle sources for estimating migration in sixteenth-century Antwerp are the *Poortersboeken*, the city's citizenship registers, which are complete for most of the sixteenth century. While the *Poortersboeken* provide information on origins and occupational groups, this source is limited in sketching a picture of overall migration to Antwerp because few immigrants actually obtained citizenship, so only a small minority of all the foreigners who chose to live out their lives in Antwerp is recorded in the *Poortersboeken*. Nevertheless, scholars have made good use of these registers, particularly in estimating immigration from the hinterland. But the kinds of sources local historians have tended to focus on when estimating pre-industrial population changes including migration, such as parish registers,¹³ are much less useful in the case of Antwerp.

Quantification of overall migration to Antwerp must be generalized from the *Poortersboeken* and supplemented with the evidence gleaned from other sources. The study of German immigrants is no exception to this. Compounding this problem is the fact that the most visible and economically most important of those Germans who came to Antwerp for any length of time were wholesale merchants, who found little need to obtain citizenship, and often were under no compulsion to bother with the status of *ingezetenen*.

¹¹ Ibid., 164.

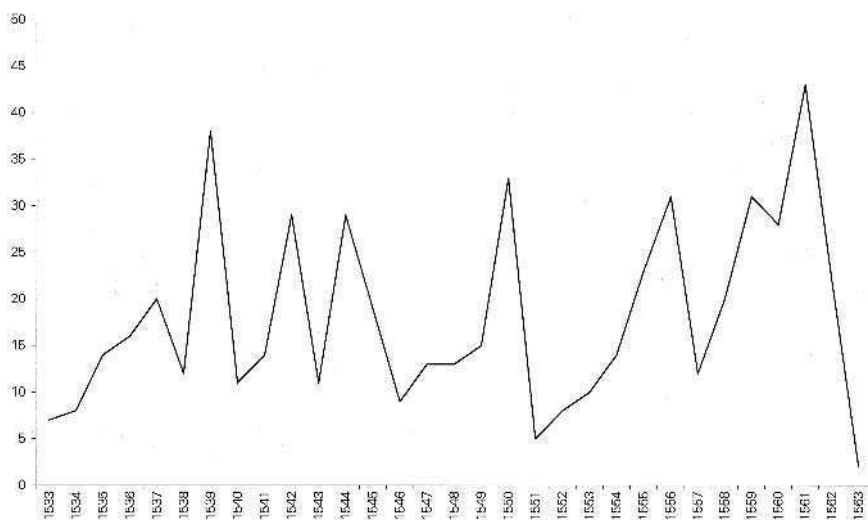
¹² Gabriel Audisio, 'Une Grande Migration Alpine en Provence (1460–1560),' *Bollettino storico-bibliografico subalpino* 87 (1989): 69–70.

¹³ See, for example, Stephen C. Wallwork, 'Allowing for Migration in Estimating Early Population Levels,' *Local Population Studies* 56 (1996): 30–42.

Figure 1 traces the number of German immigrants entered in Antwerp's *Poortersboeken* (the citizenship registers) between the years 1533 and 1563. Most of the 560 or so Germans who were registered in the *Poortersboeken* during these years came from the relatively nearby towns of Aachen and Cologne, but many also came from Cleves, Julich and Münster. Most of these immigrants were engaged in some kind of skilled work. While many Germans came to Antwerp to work in some aspect of the transport industry, the majority of the skilled workers were cloth shearers, tailors, and others associated with the cloth finishing and marketing business. German bakers, butchers, shoemakers, and the like also came to Antwerp in measurable numbers during the middle third of the sixteenth century.

Entries in the *Poortersboeken* list the town of origin of those immigrants who obtained citizenship, allowing an analysis of where immigrants were coming from, and also which areas provided the various trades for Antwerp's growing workforce. Sixty-seven men from Cologne were entered in the *Poortersboeken* during the thirty-year period. Of these sixty-seven, most were engaged in some aspect of the textile trades (most often as tailors, cloth shearers, etc.). This figure is not too surprising when one considers that Cologne was an important

Figure 1. Number of German Immigrants Registered as Antwerp Citizens (1533-1563)



(Source: Antwerpse Poortersboeken, 1533-1608)

German textile-producing city throughout the fifteenth century. But by the sixteenth century much of Cologne's prominence as a textile city had been usurped by the demand for finer English cloths,¹⁴ a product that the Antwerp market provided. Cologne's own textile industry at this point was based on the production of *tirtey* (made from a blend of wool and linen), which rural weavers were rapidly taking over, further exacerbating the crisis created by large English cloth imports.¹⁵ Eighty-six men from Aachen were entered in the *Poortersboeken* during the same thirty-year period and fully 20% of them were cloth shearers.

Indeed, the vast majority of the German immigrants were skilled workers hoping to find opportunities in the growing commercial center. Many German immigrant citizens practiced occupations associated with Antwerp's major lines of commerce: 13% were cloth shearers, and 13% were tailors. Others were engaged in practical trades dependent upon a bustling commercial town: 3% were coopers, 3.5% were knife makers, pewterers and smiths of various sorts, while 5.3% were shoemakers, just under 2% were bakers, and 8% were unskilled laborers of one sort or another. Germans were also involved in the business of catering to a large foreign community: 4% were tappers, 3% were innkeepers or taverniers, 3.5 % were packers/porters, 2.6% were shippers/teamsters. Indeed, some estimates suggest that as much as 30% of the total population of Antwerp was employed as either a merchant of one kind or another, or in occupations supporting trade.¹⁶ Figure 2 shows the occupational groups German immigrants reported in the *Poortersboeken*.

Immigrants from different towns tended to have similar occupations. Of the twenty-five individuals with origins in the area of Münster, seven were tailors, and four were cloth shearers. Immigrants originating in Aachen were also predominantly textile workers. There were seven tailors and two cloth shearers among the forty-one immigrants from the area of Cleves, but many of the immigrants from Cleves had trades associated with metalwork, such as pewterer, knife maker, blacksmith, and even a goldsmith. Of the eighty-eight immi-

¹⁴ Franz Irsigler, 'Industrial Production, International Trade, and Public Finances in Cologne (XIVth and XVth Century),' *Journal of European Economic History* 6 (1977): 269–305.

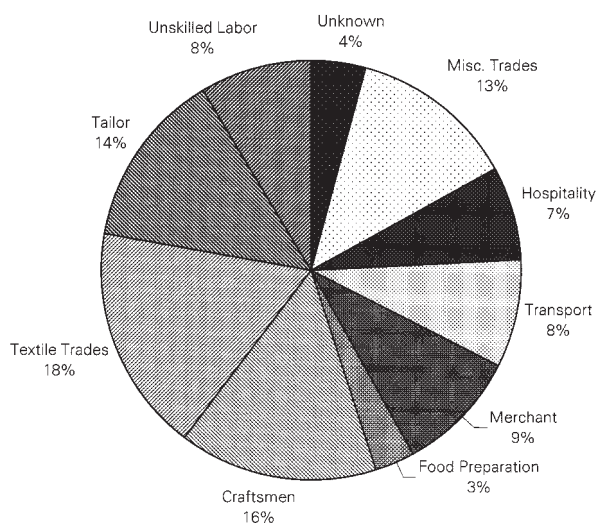
¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 283.

¹⁶ J. van Roey, 'De Correlatie tussen het sociale-beroepsmilieu en de godsdienstkeuze te Antwerpen op het einde der XVIe eeuw,' *Bronnen door de religieus geschiedenis van België* (Leuven: n.p., 1968), 242.

grants from various towns in the area surrounding Cologne most were shoemakers and peddlers, or even unskilled street workers rather than skilled textile workers. This may very well have had to do with the fact that Cologne had its own textile industry that was still active, though in decline.¹⁷ A more probable explanation was the great need for skilled cloth workers in Cologne, which was one of the largest markets in Germany for English cloth sales by way of Antwerp.¹⁸ Only 9% of the German immigrants who obtained citizenship during these years listed their occupation as either merchant or peddler. This figure is significant when one considers the large number of foreign merchants that lived in the city during Antwerp's *Golden Age*. It would seem that few German merchants opted for citizenship.

Only a handful of these 560 German immigrants to Antwerp who obtained citizenship were women. Two women were from Cologne, with one each from Aachen, Frankfurt, Hesse, and Cleves. Two of

Figure 2. North German Immigrant Occupational Groups (1533–1563)



(Source: Antwerpse Poortersboeken, 1533–1608)

¹⁷ Franz Irsigler, 'Industrial Production, International Trade, and Public Finances,' 283.

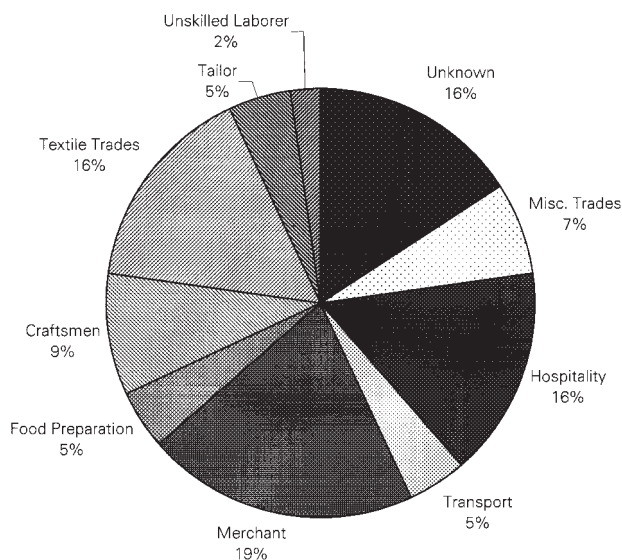
¹⁸ Donald J. Harreld, 'German Merchants and their Trade in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp,' in *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries)*, edited by Peter Stabel, et al. (Leuven: Garant, 2000), 172–173.

these women were tapsters, and one a cloth shearer. The occupations of the others are either not recorded or are unclear from the records. Few women would have immigrated to Antwerp by themselves during this period. And even those women who accompanied husbands to the city likely would have had little need to obtain citizenship if their husbands did.

Since Antwerp may have attracted as many as 2000 immigrants per year the numbers of Germans presented in the *Poortersboeken* suggest that most were not Germans, only about 2% in good years. The presence of numerous skilled workers in these registers may indicate that those Germans who migrated to Antwerp but chose not to obtain citizenship probably practiced occupations similar to those who did obtain citizenship.

In contrast to the North Germans, far fewer South Germans immigrated to Antwerp and became citizens. Unlike the northern Germans, most of the South Germans who became citizens of Antwerp were merchants. Figure 3 shows the occupations reported by South German immigrants. The percentage of South German artisans, textile workers or tailors was far less than for North Germans. One would expect that only the higher paid professions would even begin to attract South

Figure 3. South German Immigrant Occupational Groups (1533–1563)



(Source: Antwerpse Poortersboeken, 1533–1608)

Germans to Antwerp, although in a couple of cases laborers migrated to Antwerp from southern German towns and become citizens.

Again, one must bear in mind that the data on German immigrants who became citizens of Antwerp address only a small portion of the Germans who immigrated to Antwerp, and that only a small percentage of the merchants who traded in Antwerp stayed for long periods of time. One particularly prominent merchant from Leipzig, Wolf Puschinger, lived in Antwerp from 1530s until his death about 1560 without ever obtaining full citizenship. His son, Jeronimus, carried on the business his father had built, raised his family, and seems never to have left the city.¹⁹ The majority of the German merchant community stayed in Antwerp for only a short time. Much more common among the merchants of some substance was the case of Sebastian Polner of Bavaria who was resident in Antwerp for years at a time while in the service of Lucas Rem of Augsburg, but did not live out his life in the city.²⁰ Smaller scale merchants, most of them from northern German towns, however, came to Antwerp only occasionally to buy and sell goods before returning to their home city.

North German Merchants

While the term *Hoogduitser* or High German was commonly applied to merchants from the area from Basel to Strasbourg, Ulm to Augsburg, Nuremberg to Leipzig, Frankfurt to Kassel, merchants of Cologne were also occasionally included to some degree or another in this group.²¹ Due to its relative proximity to Antwerp compared to other

¹⁹ Wolf Puschinger was engaged in financial speculation in his later years as was his son Jeronimus Puschinger, SAA, T-1275—Vreemde Crediteuren (16th–18th Centuries). Jeronimus also owned a house on the Grote Markt as late as 1589, SAA, T-637, Cohier inhoudende alle die proprietarissen ende gegoeyde van huysen ende gronde van erven comende oft palend aende ruyen oft vlieten, 1589, 25. Jeronimus's daughter Beatrix was born on 3 December 1577 in Antwerp, see: Onze Lieve Vrouwekerk, Dopenregisters, 1577.

²⁰ *Tagebuch des Lucas Rem aus den Jahren 1494–1541*, edited by B. Greiff, (Augsburg: J.N. Hartmann'schen, 1861), 71. See also SAA, Certificatieboek 5, f° 96, 150.

²¹ Rita Goris, 'De export door de Duitsers uit Antwerpen in de jaren 1543–1545,' (unpublished thesis, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1965), 16. When referring to the *hoochduitser*s, Goris states "ook behoorden tot die groep soms kooplieden van Keulen, dat tevens Hanzestad was . . ."; see also the discussion in Floris Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen*, vol. 7, 152.

German towns, it should come as no surprise that Cologne was Antwerp's chief trading partner for quite some time. By the end of the fifteenth century, Cologne's share of Antwerp's exports was at its highest, and Cologne merchants regularly traveled to the city. Renée Doehaerd has suggested that Cologne merchants amounted to 531 of the roughly 1100 German merchants operating in Antwerp at some point between 1488 and 1514, but she expressly identified only eighty-one as Hansards.²² If Doehaerd was right, and that is debatable, one must ask the question, what constituted a Hanse merchant? It is clear that for at least part of the fifteenth century the status of Cologne merchants in the Hanse was in question.

Citizenship and place of residence may have determined whether a Cologne merchant could claim Hanse membership. For example, the Rhine wine merchants, Jan Berenbach and Gheerart Pelgram, both of Cologne, but living and operating regularly out of Antwerp, are never identified in the Antwerp records as being Hanse merchants. Could it be that once a merchant had established a residence in Antwerp independently of the Hanse house he could no longer claim to be a Hansard? It stands to reason that once a merchant took Antwerp citizenship he might no longer be able to make a claim of Hanse membership. Between 1533 and 1563 sixty-seven individuals from Cologne became citizens (*poorters*) of Antwerp. Of these six were merchants and two were involved in transport. But it is likely that many more merchants from Cologne took advantage of the status of *ingezetenen* which accorded them most of the rights of citizenship without making them full citizens. This status too would have made a claim to Hanse membership unlikely for the merchants who obtained it.

More importantly, however, it appears that Cologne's participation in either the Reichstag or the Hansetag determined whether or not its merchants could claim the privileges of the Hanseatic League while in Antwerp. When Cologne was participating in the Reichstag, the city's merchants had to forgo the protection and privileges of the Hanse.²³ Since, by the sixteenth century Cologne was so often working within the framework of the Reichstag, the status of Cologne as a Hanse city was quite confused and it is likely that while in

²² See the extensive tables in: Renée Doehaerd's, *Études Anversoises*.

²³ Georg Schmidt, 'Städtehanse und Reich im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert,' in *Niedergang oder Übergang? zur Spätzeit der Hanse im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, edited by Antjekatherin Grassman, (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 36.

Antwerp most Cologne merchants simply found an unofficial accommodation outside of the Hanse framework.

In addition to Cologne, merchants from a variety of smaller North German towns such as Münster, Julich and Cleves had also been coming to Antwerp for over one hundred years by the time the city granted the Hanse its first official establishment in 1468. The first Hansard in Antwerp and the pioneer in securing the Hanse privilege in Antwerp was Hendrik Zuderman, a merchant from Dortmund, who purchased a house in Antwerp as early as 1339.²⁴

Given the data available in Antwerp, there is no way to know what percentage of the city's exports to Cologne were eventually sent on to other destinations in the Empire or even farther south to Italy, but the role Cologne merchants played in Antwerp's export industry would not be diminished either way. While the southern German cities of Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Frankfurt were surpassing Cologne as the most important destinations for Antwerp's exports by the sixteenth century, Cologne not only remained immensely important, but merchants from Cologne were just as prevalent as they had been fifty years earlier.

The Great South German Firms

The great South German merchant families such as the Welsers, the Hochstetters, the Fuggers, the Herwarts, and a few others, had the most prominent German presence in Antwerp and were responsible for the lion's share of the trade between Antwerp and the various German cities. These family firms, mostly from Augsburg but also from Nuremberg and elsewhere, came to Antwerp to participate in the new trading opportunities that were developing there. Antwerp was not completely unknown to the South Germans before the sixteenth century, but conditions became ripe for their participation only after the Portuguese and the English concentrated their commerce at Antwerp.

Not until the second decade of the sixteenth century did the large merchant families of Augsburg and Nuremberg begin to establish permanent offices in Antwerp. Through their agents, the merchant

²⁴ J. van den Nieuwenhuizen, 'Hendrik Zuderman, koopman uit Almaengien,' *Antwerpen: Tijdschrift der Stad Antwerpen* 12 (1966): 133-139.

firms of Augsburg more than Nuremberg dominated the trade between Antwerp and the southern German cities. The Fuggers first established a permanent branch in Antwerp in 1508, the same year that the Portuguese made Antwerp their staple market for the colonial trade. 1508 is also the year that the Portuguese Viceroy Francisco de Almeida made an arrangement with Indian pepper suppliers fixing the form of payment for pepper to $3/4$ in gold and $1/4$ in copper.²⁵ This significantly increased the demand for copper in Antwerp, and the Germans were quite willing to direct as much copper as necessary to meet demand.

Germans had been bringing copper to Antwerp for decades. In the closing decades of the fifteenth century, for example, the agent of the Portuguese king in Bruges was known to have purchased copper at Antwerp to be used for cannon and other armaments.²⁶ Attracted by the booming copper trade, the Welsers sent an extensive trade mission to Antwerp a year later.²⁷ Both firms, as well as the Hochstetters, had purchased large houses and established branch offices in Antwerp in the first decades of the sixteenth century. The great German firms and the Portuguese converged on Antwerp at precisely the same time and benefited mutually from the Asian pepper trade that was just beginning to expand.

The best known of the Augsburg merchants, thanks in no small part to his *Tagebuch*, is Lucas Rem. By the mid-sixteenth century Rem would become a great merchant in his own right, but at the turn of the sixteenth century young Lucas Rem learned about business by working as a factor for the Welsers of Augsburg. Rem's connection with the firm was through his mother, the daughter of Lucas Welser, young Rem's namesake. For instance Lucas Rem learned Italian and the art of accounting at the age of 13 while in Venice in 1494.²⁸ Rem traveled extensively throughout Europe as a young man, working for a time in various Iberian trading centers before making his first trip to Antwerp in November of 1509 to attend the

²⁵ Bailey W. Diffie, and George D. Winius, *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415–1580*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 318.

²⁶ Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History*, (London: Longman, 1993), 47.

²⁷ Herman van der Wee, and Jan Materné, 'Antwerp as a World Market in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' 22.

²⁸ *Tagebuch des Lucas Rem aus den Jahren 1494–1541*, 5.

Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom fairs, presumably to become proficient in the art of trade.²⁹

Because the principals of the great firms rarely came to Antwerp themselves, preferring to work through factors and agents like Lucas Rem, it is often difficult to extract from the available evidence which firms were active in the city. For instance, one might presume that Christoffel Hochstetter, often mentioned in Antwerp sources, was associated with the great Augsburg firm of the same name; however, during much of his early career in Antwerp he was acting as the factor of his relative, Marcus Ulstadt, a textile merchant of Augsburg.³⁰ Likewise, the Manlich firm of Augsburg seems to have played only a minor role at the Antwerp market despite the fact that it had an office in the city. But upon further examination it has become clear that Lazarus and Bartolomeo Tucher of Nuremberg were the Manlich agents in Antwerp and conducted much of the firm's business.³¹

Other merchant houses like the Hans Herwart firm and the Jacob Herbrodt firm, both also of Augsburg, at first glance seem not to have been active in Antwerp before the second half of the sixteenth century. But Wolf Puschinger, a merchant from Leipzig, was the agent for these two firms in Antwerp as well as doing business for himself. Later in the sixteenth century, the sons of Hans Herwart, Hans Paulus and Hans Heinrich, both may have conducted business personally in Antwerp. They were in the city at least long enough to purchase two houses on the *Ridderstraat* in 1556.³² The firm of Bartolomeo Jenisch and Brothers was another German firm focused on Antwerp; many more likely had dealings in the city through factors or agents.

The partnership of Anton Haug, Hans Langenauer, and Ulrich Link was an Augsburg company with considerable presence in Antwerp by the middle of the sixteenth century. In addition to its offices in Augsburg and Antwerp, the Haug-Langenaur-Link firm, had offices in Nuremberg, Ulm, Cologne, and Venice, but the Antwerp office was by far the largest.³³

²⁹ Ibid., 15.

³⁰ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 16 February 1542, f° 96.

³¹ SAA, Schepenregister 193, 17 February 1538, f° 460v–461. For more on the Manlich family see Gerhard Seibold, *Die Manlich, Geschichte einer Augsburger Kaufmannsfamilie*, (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1995).

³² Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 377.

³³ Stadtarchiv Augsburg (hereafter abbreviated SA), Literalien (3:106), *Handelsbuch von Anton Haug, Sen., 1532–1549*.

Nuremberg firms also accounted for a large share of the trade between Antwerp and southern Germany, although to a lesser degree than the Augsburg firms. Jacob Welser, a merchant of the Nuremberg branch of the famous Augsburg family, was heavily involved in the pepper and spice trade (for which Antwerp was the northern European mart). Various other Nuremberg merchants also had dealings in Antwerp including Andreas and Simon Imhoff.

Although not exactly great merchant firms in the sense of the old firms of Augsburg and Nuremberg, several Leipzig merchants also played a vital role in Antwerp's trade with Germany, both on their own account and as factors for others. Wolf Puschinger, the merchant of Leipzig mentioned above was the single largest exporter of goods from Antwerp to Germany by the mid-sixteenth century. In addition to being the Antwerp agent of the Herwarts and the Herbrots, he was the import agent for Niclaus Eydinger, a merchant of Breslau.³⁴ Puschinger most likely also transacted business on his own in addition to being a factor for others, but because only his name appears in many of the records listing commercial transactions, there is no way to determine which exports may have been made in his capacity as a factor and which were made on his own account. Nevertheless, Puschinger was a prominent merchant in the Low Countries around the middle of the sixteenth century, even serving for a time as a financial agent for the Netherlands government.

The Reitweisers were another important Leipzig merchant family in Antwerp. Kilian Reitweiser and Wolf Reitweiser each had a role in Antwerp's trade with Germany.³⁵ Kilian Reitweiser was one member in the well known partnership with Joachim Pruner of Berlin who had become a resident of Antwerp. Although he seems not to have been involved as a partner with Kilian and Pruner, Wolf Reitweiser worked for the Reitweiser–Pruner firm for some time.³⁶ Eventually Wolf Reitweiser began conducting business on his own account, and he was a factor for others including Lucas Schellenberger of Augsburg. Wolf Reitweiser was quite active in the sugar trade between Antwerp and Germany. Heinrich Preusser, another Leipzig merchant operating in Antwerp by the mid-sixteenth century, was the factor of both the firm of Michael Schwicker and Brother of Nuremberg, and that of Sebastian Schwicker of Leipzig.

³⁴ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, f° 69, and 96; Certificatieboek 7, f° 317.

³⁵ Although clearly from the same family, their relationship remains uncertain.

³⁶ Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 62.

The business of these large scale exporters constituted the backbone of the export trade between Antwerp and Germany, whether as principals of great South German merchant firms or as factors or agents of one or more merchant concerns. It is interesting to note that, with the exception of the intense wrangling for control of the disposition of the Portuguese pepper shipments, competition does not seem to have been a very great concern.³⁷ Virtually all of these large-scale merchants were involved in some kind of mutual business activities, in some cases in speculative ventures and loans, or rather more often representing each other as agents in business dealings.

While these merchants tended to ship their goods to many of the same locations, some dominated the trade of a particular product with a particular city, for instance the Imhoffs in the spice trade with Nuremberg, or Puschingen in the English cloth trade with Augsburg. Nevertheless, there was plenty of room for multiple participants in the major products and major markets, at least among the largest of the German firms.

Mid-Level German Merchants

The great merchants, while clearly vital to Antwerp's trade with Germany during the sixteenth century, provide us with a picture of only one segment of Antwerp's German merchant community. Indeed, the representatives of the great firms, while they may have been responsible for most of the trade between Antwerp and Germany, were quite few in number. There were a great many less well-known German merchants who were also part of the merchant community in Antwerp. Indeed, the German merchants in Antwerp could be categorized along three lines: the great firms, the mid-level merchants, and the small-scale merchants. This middling group consisted of merchants of substantial means, but not quite to the extent of the great firms.

Like the great firms these merchants were usually organized in family firms. The Schorer brothers of Ulm provide a particularly good example of a large merchant firm (although not the equals of one of the great South German firms) that was quite active in the international trade of Antwerp. Joris Schorer was the principal representative

³⁷ J.A. Goris, *Études sur les colonies marchandes méridionales*, 196, 198.

of this family engaged primarily in the trade in textiles, most notably the export trade to Germany in northern English kerseys and the import to Antwerp of German fustians. Established in Antwerp by at least 1536, Joris and his brother Lenart were well enough known in the Antwerp merchant community that several merchants vouched for them as upstanding businessmen.³⁸ Although Joris was married to Susanna Haug, a daughter of Anton Haug of the Haug-Langenauer-Link firm of Augsburg,³⁹ and some of their transactions parallel those of the Haug firm,⁴⁰ the Schorers do not appear to have been involved as partners in that firm. Among their many other dealings, the Schorer firm exported English wool to Augsburg, and English textile products, particularly kerseys, to Frankfurt and Nuremberg.

The Schorer brothers traveled often to England where they sold German fustians and purchased kerseys for sale in Antwerp and for shipment to Germany via Antwerp. The Schorers procured a substantial number of northern English kerseys for Wolf Puschinger who was acting as the agent of Jacob Herbrodt of Augsburg early in 1555.⁴¹ Why Puschinger would have bypassed the English is unclear; however one might expect that working with other Germans whenever possible offered some advantage, particularly to those merchants who were well known to each other. This is not to say that German merchants avoided merchants of other nations. Of the thirty-three creditors listed in the bankruptcy settlement of the Bavarian merchant, Sebastian Liebmauwer, fifteen were Germans, thirteen were Antwerpeners, three were English, and one was Spanish.⁴²

Little else is known of Sebastian Liebmauwer, another important but lesser-known German merchant, except that he served as a procurement agent for some merchants of Breslau and Leipzig, and at least once as the import agent for the Bruns brothers of Nuremberg. He was also married to a daughter of Kilian Reitweiser of Leipzig. This notwithstanding, the bulk of his business activities appears to have been in his own name. Virtually all of his shipments to Germany went to Nuremberg and were comprised of English and Amsterdam cloth, and of sugar. He purchased English cloth directly from London merchants, either on his own account or for others.⁴³

³⁸ SAA, Certificatieboek 6, f^o 176v.

³⁹ SAA, Certificatieboek 15, f^o 13v.

⁴⁰ SAA, Certificatieboek 6, f^o 181r.

⁴¹ SAA, Certificatieboek 10, f^o 138, 354, 355.

⁴² SAA, Tresorij 1280, loose pages (1576).

⁴³ SAA, Certificatieboek 11, f^o 147, 158.

Simon Brudegem and his brothers, Hans and Jeronimus, merchants of Leipzig, were also involved in the cloth trade. These brothers dealt almost exclusively in English cloth, and it seems that they directed all of their business to Leipzig. Among this lesser known group of merchants, it was not uncommon for a merchant to trade between Antwerp and a single German town. Hans Spiegelberch of Braunschweig imported dyestuffs into Antwerp.⁴⁴ Like the Brudegem brothers, he exported English cloth, and he too sent virtually all of his cloth to Leipzig.

While the Brudegem brothers and Hans Spiegelberch traded on their own account, some merchants acting as Antwerp factors for others also specialized in the trade with just one town. For example, Hans Trantman of Leipzig, the factor of Servaes Runtveles and Stenzel Monauw of Breslau, exported sayes and satins of the Low Countries to Leipzig. It also appears that by the mid-1550s Trantman had moved to Leipzig and relied on Sebastian Liebmauwer, still resident in Antwerp, to procure goods for him and to send them on to Leipzig.⁴⁵

To be sure, not all of the mid-level German merchants were from the area of Leipzig. Sebolt Wouderer of Nuremberg was one of the more modest of the South German merchants, but his mid-century exports from Antwerp to Nuremberg totaling 694 £ Fl. suggests he was a merchant of some means. His trade from Antwerp focused almost entirely on sugar and various dry goods. The Nuremberg merchant Hans Fellberger concentrated his efforts in the sugar trade, only in this case destined for Cologne. He was also one of a number of Germans involved in the trade with Italy, particularly the trade in Flemish cloth.

What sets these mid-level German merchants apart is the degree to which they tended toward specialization either in a single product, or in shipping products to a particular town, or often both. The marriages of some of these merchants to daughters of the large merchants may have been instigated to increase prestige and to expand their markets, and they may have had that effect. It is striking, however, how these marriage alliances allowed merchants to work together and still keep their separate mercantile identities.

⁴⁴ Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 255.

⁴⁵ SAA, Certificatieboek 11, f^o 100.

The Small-Scale Merchant

The majority of the thousands of merchants who visited Antwerp and were active in the trade with Germany during course of the sixteenth century could be characterized as small scale merchants. For instance, total exports for roughly 75% of all merchants shipping goods to Germany during the entire two and one half year period from 1543–1545 totaled less than 100 £ Fl., and for fully 50% of all merchants total exports fell at or less than 25 £ Fl. Few of these merchants were of southern German origin; the bulk of them were from the area around Cologne, other North German cities, or the region of Antwerp itself. Although tracing the activities of all of them with any degree of accuracy would be an insurmountable task, it seems that those from German cities (with the notable exception of Cologne) more than likely never resided in Antwerp for any length of time.

Most of these merchants made perhaps one or two shipments per year and the goods they shipped tended to be rather diverse. Willem van Münster made two shipments in 1544, both going to Münster, consisting of rice, raisins, oil, some spices, and other dry goods. Coenraedt Retenberger made only one shipment of leather to Cologne in 1545. Christoffel Bruns shipped sugar, raisins, and figs to Bremen in one overland shipment in 1543. Relying only on the records concerning the large merchants, one might assume that textiles, spices, and sugar were the only products of interest for the German market. But it quickly becomes evident after even the most cursory examination of the activities of these small scale merchants that the variety of goods being shipped into Germany was really quite broad, including not only textiles of all sorts, sugar, and spices, but things such as dried fish, wines, oils, cheese, salt, raisins, dyestuffs, soap, leather, skins, pelts, paper, books, artwork, clothing, sundries, and dry goods of all types.

These small-scale merchants exported many of the products of the southern Netherlands into Germany. Some studies would place the percentage of southern Netherlands products exported to Germany as high as 38% of the total exports in some years.⁴⁶ Indeed, merchants also shipped to Germany the textile products of the southern Netherlands towns such as Bruges, Mechelen, Leuven, and Lier, although

⁴⁶ Filip Vermeylen, 'De export vanuit zuidlijke Nederlanden naar Duitsland omstreeks het midden van de 16de eeuw,' (unpublished thesis, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1989), 74.

not in such large quantities as English cloths. Small-scale merchants also shipped the sayes of Arras, Hondschoote, Lille, and Mons to Germany in quantities (if not in value) approaching even those of English cloths. The small-scale merchants played a significant role in the southern Netherlands economy due to their export of these kinds of products to Germany.

In a very general sense, the German merchants in Antwerp could be categorized as agents (or even principals) of large firms with considerable capital engaged in long-distance trade, as mid-level merchants of means whose trade paralleled that of the great firms, or as more locally oriented small-scale merchants with limited capital at their disposal engaging in international trade but only with one city or region (usually their native town). These categories show the great variety of merchant types who came to the city. Partners or factors usually represented many of the great merchant firms of Augsburg, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Cologne, etc. These firms controlled the largest share of the trade between Antwerp and Germany. Nevertheless, the majority of German merchants visiting the Antwerp markets were not associated with the great firms. This great diversity in status between the partners and factors of the largest firms, and the small-scale merchant who only occasionally came to Antwerp's markets illustrates only one aspect of the history of the Germans in Antwerp. From an organizational standpoint, on the other hand, many German firms had much in common regardless of their size. Few merchants, even among the largest of the South German firms, specialized in just one product, and most traded in whatever product might be profitable.

Beyond the elite few of the great South German merchant firms was a plethora of intermediate and small-scale merchant firms and individual merchants operating in Antwerp. These small-scale merchants made a significant contribution to the southern Netherlands economy because of their activity in the export trade. The model for the small-scale merchants which emerges from the data is that of local merchants with very limited capital, traveling with their goods between Antwerp and their home city; a characterization usually associated with peddlers. Some of these small-scale merchants may, indeed, have been peddlers, but probably not in all cases. Many small-scale merchants were more than mere peddlers or retailers. German immigrants to Antwerp included many peddlers or *kramers*,⁴⁷

⁴⁷ SAA, Poortersboeken 1533-1563.

but the small-scale merchants from northern Germany were wholesale merchants in every sense of the word. What distinguished them from the great merchants was the scale of their enterprise.

For instance, the very large firm of Andries and Simon Imhoff of Nuremberg shipped goods from Antwerp to Germany totaling 19,626 £ Fl. during the period 1543–45. Jacob Welser shipped goods totaling 14,869 £ Fl. during the same period. This is in stark contrast to the much smaller merchants who made up the majority of German merchants in Antwerp. Pieter van Dortmund and Harman van Aken each shipped only 3 £ Fl. worth of goods during the same period. Even the activities of a merchant with more substantial commercial interests who came to Antwerp more often than Pieter or Harman, such as Jan van Münster who shipped goods valued at 329 £ Fl., are dwarfed by those of the great firms.

The Organization of German Merchants

Although there were many individual German merchants active in Antwerp, partnerships were much more common. Partnership forms much like the *societas* or *commenda*, common throughout the Middle Ages in Mediterranean trade that were sometimes characterized by a relatively short duration, were clearly employed by Germans in Antwerp, although not very frequently. In July 1535, Hans Papenbruch of Aachen, Anslem Odeur de Eldre of 's-Hertogenbosch (Bois le Duc), Pierre Rousee of Arras, Gerard Paul of Aachen, and Nicholas de Marretz of Tournai drew up a “contract de société et compaignye” in Antwerp for a trading voyage to Spain (in whichever place would be most profitable) and then on to Peru.⁴⁸ The partners’ investments were as follows: Papenbruch, 75 £ Fl.; Odeur de Eldre, 65 £ Fl.; Rousee, 100 £ Fl.; Paul, 40 £ Fl.; and de Marretz, 20 £ Fl. Each individual was required to pay his share of any customs, tolls, freight, expenses, etc, before profits were divided. Papenbruch and Odeur de Eldre were appointed as principal managers. Once in Spain, the group had the option of selling their merchandise at the highest possible price and dissolving the company, or if it were decided by majority vote that a higher price could be fetched in

⁴⁸ Likely referring to the Viceroyalty of Peru as a general location.

Peru, they would travel there to sell their merchandise. After Peru, the merchants would return to Antwerp with whatever merchandise they might purchase in Peru and sell it in Antwerp and then dissolve the company.⁴⁹

Merchants involved primarily in overland trade, including the Germans, more commonly formed a *compagnia*, usually, but not exclusively, based on the family organization.⁵⁰ Partners in most German family firms jointly had unlimited liability in contrast to the Italians who, by the fifteenth century, had shifted to limited liability. This organizational form had the advantage of allowing significant growth through the addition of more partners if the need arose, as well as an indefinite duration.⁵¹ The best known example of growth through additional partners is the *Grosse Ravensburger Gesellschaft*, a South German firm that had as many as eighty partners active at one time. The firm lasted for about 150 years.⁵² One might also point to the firm of Anton Haug-Hans Langenauer-Ulrich Link & Kin as another example of a company with many partners that was particularly active in Antwerp. The company was organized in Augsburg in 1531 and was one of the largest of the German firms operating in Antwerp by the middle of the sixteenth century.

The enterprise of Erasmus Schetz and Sons is perhaps one of the best examples of a family enterprise of German origin that was actually founded in Antwerp. Schetz is one of those individuals who defy categorization. One could, as most scholars have, consider him to be from Antwerp, since by the 1540s he had lived in Antwerp for such a long time. However, Schetz was born in the vicinity of Aachen to Koenraad van Schetzenberg and the daughter of a German copper merchant. His mother's uncle, named Rutger Kranz, who was living in Antwerp in the St. Joris parish and was apparently quite rich but had no children, said he would make Erasmus his heir if he would come to Antwerp and enter into his copper trade.⁵³ His marriage to Ida van Richtergem, daughter of a merchant of Aachen resident in

⁴⁹ SAA, Notariaat—2070, 's Hertoghen Sr., 7 June 1535, f° 62–65. This contract is also transcribed in: Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 83–89.

⁵⁰ Hermann Kellenbenz, *Die Wiege der Moderne: Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Europas, 1350–1650*, (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), 231.

⁵¹ Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, 436.

⁵² See the three volume work, Aloys Schulte, *Geschichte der grossen Ravensburger Handelsgesellschaft, 1380–1530*, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1923).

⁵³ Floris Prims, *Antwerpiensia*, vol. 13, (Antwerp: de Vlijt, 1928–56), 64.

Antwerp, further solidified his ties to Germany. Schetz made his fortune as a result of this partnership with his great-uncle.

Upon the death of Erasmus in 1550, the firm survived as Gaspar Schetz and Brothers. The Schetz brothers (Gaspar, Balthazar, and Melchior) expanded their business opportunities by entering into partnerships with other merchants. In one case they entered into an agreement with two of their factors, Christoffel Pruynen in Antwerp and their Leipzig factor named Adrian, for a period of six years. The partnership was divided into three equal shares with the Schetz's controlling one third. The Schetz brothers had no management responsibilities in this venture.⁵⁴

Family-based partnerships were not restricted to the great firms. The Schorer brothers of Ulm, mentioned above, were partners in the cloth trade, and while operating on a much larger scale than most German merchants, the Schorer firm cannot be counted among the largest of the German firms active in Antwerp. Joris Schorer was resident in Antwerp while his brother Lenart Schorer more often remained in Ulm, but both of them traveled to England from time to time selling German fustians and purchasing English cloths and kerseys. The Beste brothers operated on an even smaller scale. These brothers, Willem and Dierick, came to Antwerp from northwestern Germany during the 1530s and engaged in trade with the area around Cologne. They also were involved heavily in Antwerp's sugar industry.

Individuals with no family connections also formed partnerships. Two Antwerp merchants Wouter Potten and Hans Bochele formed a merchant partnership for a period of four years whereby Bochele was to take up residence in Nuremberg while Potten remained in Antwerp.⁵⁵ Each was to contribute capital to the enterprise. The business most certainly depended upon the infrastructure that had developed around the trade between Antwerp and Nuremberg. This type of 'correspondence' merchant organization was fairly common among all sizes of merchant firms. For instance, the partnership organization of Kilian Reitweiser who was to reside in Leipzig and Joachim Pruner (originally of Berlin) who was to reside in Antwerp, was to last for twelve years.⁵⁶ Likewise, although oriented toward

⁵⁴ M.P. Génard, 'Un acte de société commerciale au XVI^e siècle (la maison Schetz frères d'Anvers),' *Bulletin de la Société Royale de Géographie d'Anvers* (1883): 3–27.

⁵⁵ SAA, Collectanea 3, 13 July 1526, f^o 149.

⁵⁶ Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 413–420.

Venice, Conrad Rehlinger, who figured prominently in the Antwerp/German trade, was in partnership with three others for terms of various durations between 1507 and 1530.⁵⁷

Partnerships such as these were often extended over and over again. Given the sophistication of overland transport in the hands of professional freighters, this type of organization had advantages for the smaller operator who could not afford the agents and factors required by the organizational forms such as permanent branch offices favored by the larger firms.

For the small individual merchant the capital required to form a partnership could exclude him from long-distance trade. Many of these smaller-scale merchants were likely involved in 'commission' businesses which would have allowed them to expand their trade without the overhead necessary to maintain a factor or agent.⁵⁸ The commission business allowed the small merchant to forward his goods to a city where they would be sold by a local merchant on a commission basis. The merchant could likewise place an order to be filled and have the merchandise sent to him, also for a commission. Not requiring capitalization like a partnership, this form of organization offered small-scale merchants a way to decrease transaction costs, allowing many more merchants with limited means to engage in trade than otherwise may have been the case.

Certainly all of the usual forms of merchant organization in use in Antwerp were intended to decrease costs. The strategy most foreign merchants employed to decrease transaction costs, however, was association with one of the foreign merchant nations in the city. The foreign merchant nations had been successful in negotiating privileges that gave them certain advantages in trade, and protections while they were in the city. As we have seen, the South German merchants never appealed for trading privileges in Antwerp. Nevertheless, merchants from some German cities enjoyed exemption from certain tolls, but the kinds of privileges that the Geneose, Portuguese, English, and others had gained over the years were not part of the South German merchants' bundle of business favors.

One of the main reasons for the establishment of merchant associations that sought to obtain special privileges was to guarantee

⁵⁷ Franz Josef Schöningh, *Die Rehlinger von Augsburg. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, (Paderborn, 1927), 72.

⁵⁸ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 325-326.

property rights. Commercial techniques addressing property rights that were common in Antwerp at the turn of the fifteenth century probably decreased the need for privileges in the eyes of many merchants. Most important among these new techniques were the various certificates issued by city magistrates.⁵⁹ Merchants routinely obtained certificates to establish ownership of goods being transported to distant cities. Certificates indicated to whom the goods belonged, where the goods were going, and often included sketches of the marks and numbers on the packing materials. Presumably these certificates would have been recognized by merchants as legal and binding in Antwerp (most commercial cities had a concept of the *Law Merchant*,⁶⁰ the quasi-official body of commercial law derived from custom and practice). Certificates provided a structure outside of the merchant association to guard the property rights of merchants.

Foreign merchants still wanted to carve out their place in the city even if the commercial need for a merchant association was fading as new techniques and commercial institutions developed. Germans were clearly outsiders in the city and in many ways they attempted to create their own distinct communities and to participate in the social life of the city. One key institution that facilitated the community-building efforts of the South Germans was the High German Nation.

Germans and Antwerp Society

In an age when loyalty to the state was beginning to supercede loyalty to the locality,⁶¹ the foreign merchant nations based on country (however loosely defined) or origin fulfilled needs that could not be met in other ways. The High German Nation offered South German merchants a structure within which they could negotiate the institutions of the city and participate in civil society while maintaining their collective identity.

The most visible Germans in the Antwerp market, the factors of the great South German firms and agents who worked for others as

⁵⁹ Antwerp's *Certificatieboeken* run from about 1488 to 1540 with some interruptions, and then fairly continuously through the seventeenth century.

⁶⁰ For a good general discussion of the Law Merchant see Leon E. Trakman, *The Law Merchant: The Evolution of Commercial Law*, (Littleton (CO): Rothman & Co., 1983).

⁶¹ Anthony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present*, 143.

well as conducted their own trade, were the ones most likely to be involved with the nation. Without a distinct body of documents relating to a High German Nation, however, it is not clear which Germans took the lead in advancing German interests in the Antwerp.

Some merchants were recognized as being the most important Germans in the city and were likely candidates as unofficial leaders of the German community. Mary of Hungary referred to Wolf Puschinger, mentioned above as the Antwerp agent of both the Herwart and Herbroet firms of Augsburg among others, and the largest single exporter of goods from Antwerp to Germany between 1543 and 1545, as one of the foremost merchants in the city in a letter she wrote to Charles V on 25 July 1546 bemoaning the havoc that his wars with France had wreaked on the Antwerp economy.⁶²

All the great firms had factors in Antwerp, and many of them, such as Lucas Rem, Christoffel Hochstetter, and others, were the younger sons or cousins of leading members of the South German firms. These Germans who were so often present in the city for long periods of time certainly found ways to develop a sense of community among themselves, and to participate in the social life of the city. One of the ways they participated was in the processions through the city, such as the joyous entries of the rulers. Foreign merchants of all stripes occupied an important place in these processions.

In the joyous entry of Philip, Prince of Spain and heir of the Emperor Charles V, that took place on 10 September 1549, the foreign merchant communities were expected to be among those who would greet the Prince outside the city walls and escort him into the city.⁶³ The merchants not only accompanied the dignitaries greeting the Prince, but they also outfitted themselves in colorful apparel to set them off from each other, and outfitted retainers and otherwise contributed to the cost of the procession.⁶⁴ Perhaps anticipating the need for the financial contributions of the merchants, Charles V made participation in the procession a condition in the privileges

⁶² Floris Prims, *Antwerpiensia*, vol. 13, 101. "... waarvan de voornaamsten zijn de Pemelle, de Muytinck, Rosenberg en Putsinger ..."

⁶³ Along with mounted knights, and the patrician elite of the town were to be "leur bourgoysie et plusieurs nations des marchans." SAA, Privilegiekamer 1627, *Bljide Inkomst*, Philip II bundle, undated document.

⁶⁴ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1627, *Bljide Inkomst*, Philip II bundle, letter outlining preparations, 2 April 1549.

he gave the Genoese nation in Antwerp in 1532.⁶⁵ There is little wonder that they had such an honored place in the procession.

The joyous entry of Prince Philip began as several hundred leading citizens entered the city gates followed by the foreign merchants arranged by nation. The first to enter after the important citizens were the merchants of Lucca and the merchants of Milan. The English Nation came next followed by the Spanish Nation and the Hanse merchants. There were fifty Hanse representatives all mounted, each with a lackey. They wore violet vestments bordered in silver. Their hats were made of violet velour and sported red and white feathers. Next in line came the High Germans. These merchants, each with his own lackey, rode into the city mounted on “great horses” from Germany. The total number of people in the High German group came to one hundred twenty-six. The High Germans wore violet cassocks “a manches estroictes, fendues ou ouvertes devant, longues iusques aux genoulx, avecq’vng rabbis, ou collet abbat, environ de largeur de trios doigtz.” Their cassocks were, like those of the Hansards, bordered in silver. Their violet hats were decorated with silver cords, beautiful feathers, and a “medaille d’or.”⁶⁶

Even an event as elaborate as this joyous entry was not without controversy. The Genoese and Florentine merchants argued over which would enter the city first, and the Portuguese refused to follow the English. The Emperor himself decided the issue.⁶⁷ He directed the Portuguese nation to follow the High Germans, followed by the Genoese with the Florentines taking up the rear. The Florentines may have had the most elaborate display; it included six boys from ages ten to fourteen who served as pages. Finally, the officers of the city entered through the gate followed by the Prince and the rest of the Imperial party.

⁶⁵ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1075, *Handel en Scheepvaart*, Natie van Genua, privilege granted by Charles V, 13 March 1532.

⁶⁶ This description of the Joyous Entry follows the eyewitness account given by Cornelius Grapheus, an Antwerp notable. Cornelius Grapheus, *Les très admirable, très magnifique, et triumphate entrée, du trèsahault et très puissant Prince Philippes, Prince d’Espaignes, filz de l’Empereur Charles V ensemble la vraye description des Spectacles, Theatres, archz triumphaulx, etc. Lesquelz ont este faictz et bastis a sa très desirée reception en la très renommée florissante ville d’Anvers. Anno 1549*, Bⁱⁱⁱ verso–B^{iv} recto.

⁶⁷ Juan Christoval Calvete de Estrella, *Le très-heureux voyage fair par très-haut et très-puissant Prince Don Philippe fils du Grand Empereur Charles-Quint depuis l’Espagne jusqu’à ses domaines de la Basse-Allemagne avec la description de tous les états de Brabant et de Flandres*, translated by J. Petit, vol. 4, (Brussels: Fr.-J. Olivier, 1883), 99–100.

From the city gate the procession wound its way around the city passing the many triumphal arches built by the city and many of the merchant nations. The triumphal arch built by the High Germans was quite near the abbey of St. Michael. It stood some sixty-four feet high, fifty-six feet wide, and was seventy-two feet deep. At the top of the arch was a great ball surmounted by a double-headed eagle. Adorning the arch and its interior were a variety of statues representing the cities of Augsburg and Nuremberg, and various Germanic gods and semi-mythical rulers.⁶⁸

At fifty-six representatives, not to mention their retainers, the High Germans had the largest single contingent of any of the merchant groups who participated in the joyous entry. Most of the High Germans were merchants from Augsburg, Nuremberg and environs. The Spanish and Hansards each had fifty merchants in attendance, but the English had only thirty-four, and the Portuguese only twenty. The four Italian nations taken together had sixty-three merchants participating.

Indeed, many of the opportunities the German merchants had to participate in the social life of the city came out of the various spectacles surrounding the Habsburg ruling family. The Germans as well as the other foreign merchant communities in Antwerp attended the funeral service of Don Carlos, son of Philip II of Spain, which was held in the Cathedral on 5 October 1568.⁶⁹ While perhaps not a joyous occasion, the merchants, as leading inhabitants of the city, took their place in the great church in suitable mourning attire. Much more joyous was the day when Anna, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian, came to Antwerp in 1570. While much less elaborate than the joyous entry of Philip of Spain, a great deal of pomp and fanfare went into making this a great spectacle. Several of the foreign merchant groups went to great lengths to produce fabulous productions. As the procession progressed, it came to the place where the Genoese and the High German nations had each built their great triumphal arches. Here the procession was met with music and trumpet salutes, plays and songs, and the Spanish soldiers fired a salute.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Cornelius Grapheus, *Les très admirable . . . et triumphte entrée, du . . . Prince Philippes*, N verso.

⁶⁹ Anonymous. *Chronycke van Antwerpen sedert het jaer 1500 tot 1575*, 186–187. “. . . oock alle de heeren van de weth ende der stadt, met allen die natien, cooplieden, als Spaengiaerden, Portugeeschen, Italiaenen, Hoochduytschen, Engelschen, enz.”

⁷⁰ “. . . ende daernaer gereden naer die meere toe naer het hoff, welck was

The Joyous Entry of Francis, Duke of Anjou and Alençon, who was installed as Duke of Brabant in April of 1582 was almost as elaborate as the entry of Prince Philip. The Dutch Revolt had already touched Antwerp by the 1580s. The provinces subscribing to the Union of Utrecht had deposed Philip II as sovereign of the Netherlands in the Act of Abjuration (26 July 1581). The Duke of Alençon, a French prince of the blood, agreed to rule. While he was never really very popular, and eventually returned to France in 1583, he was still entitled to the Joyous Entry. An anonymous account says that an infinite number of people including many foreigners, with the French not surprisingly predominating, came to view the entry. The account indicates that the Germans merchants and the English merchants were the only foreign merchant groups to participate in this procession.⁷¹ With the revolt in full swing Antwerp's star was clearly shining less brightly by the 1580s, but merchant groups, including the Germans, still participated in the city's spectacles.

While most of the evidence for German participation in the social life of the city comes from them acting as a community, individual Germans could also make their mark. Aside from their role as agents of South German firms, the Tucher family of Nuremberg, for instance, succeeded in becoming very involved in the social and political life of Antwerp through the person of Lazarus Tucher. Lazarus Tucher, who first appears in the Antwerp sources in 1518, married Jakobina de Cocquiel, daughter of a well-known Antwerp merchant. Best known as a financier and often associated with the commercial affairs of the Affaitatti family of Cremona, Lazarus was also involved in real estate speculation, most notably the purchase of some polder land along with his brother-in-law Karl de Cocquiel, Jean Baptista de L'Affaitatti, Bartholomeo Welser, and Balthazar Miegh (a Strasbourg merchant).⁷² Lazarus Tucher's involvement in politics as a counselor in the Emperor's high court in Mechelen was unusual for a German

Jeronimus del Ryos huys, waerby de natie van de Genevoysen ende die hoochduytsche natie binnen 3 dagen elck gemaect hadden een arcke off poorte triumpphael, daer op synde musicque, trompetten des keyzers, haer feestelyck willecome heetende met spel ende met sange, ende die spaensche soldaeten op die meerebrugge, met zeer affschietende haer busschen." Anonymous. *Chronycke van Antwerpen*, 235.

⁷¹ Anonymous. *La joyeuse et magnifique entrée de monseigneur François, fils de France, et frère unique du roi, par la grace de Dieu, duc de Brabant, d'Anjou, Alençon, Berri, &c. en sa tres-renommée ville d'Anvers*, (Antwerp: Imprimerie Ch. Plantin, 1582), 23.

⁷² SAA, Certificatieboek 7, 7 January 1552, f° 276v.

merchant in Antwerp.⁷³ Lazarus often represented other Germans before the court such as Seibold Openfelder of Nuremberg.⁷⁴

While participation in government was unusual, Germans were more commonly associated with participation in the religious controversies of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately the evidence for German participation in reformation worship in Antwerp is rather sketchy. Antwerp had a reputation for religious toleration because of its dependence on foreign merchants. Indeed, by 1550 Antwerp's magistrates so opposed the inquisition, that they successfully appealed to the regent to declare Antwerp free of intervention by the Inquisition.⁷⁵ As a result Antwerp became an island of toleration of sorts; at least for foreign merchants it was a zone of free religion in the Low Countries during a period of religious turmoil.

It is, of course, possible that Lutheranism was introduced to Antwerp via the commercial contacts between Antwerp and Germany. With the large number of German merchants as well as German workers coming into the city, it is possible that Lutheran ideas were a common topic of conversation.⁷⁶ Of the several Lutheran congregations that formed in Antwerp after 1566, most were comprised of foreigners. These congregations likely had German theological advisors as well.⁷⁷ Most German Lutherans, however, remained in the background of Antwerp's religious controversies, which tended to be focused on Calvinists anyway. Philippe Dauxy, Margaret of Austria's spy who reported on religious affiliations identified the majority of the Germans and most of the Hansards in the city as Lutherans (Martinists, as they were usually called in Antwerp). Some of the Hansards were identified as Calvinists, but for the most part people mentioned by name were Antwerpeners, so it is difficult to determine which Germans were most closely associated with Protestant ideas. Some South German and Hansard merchants did make a request to allow preaching

⁷³ G. Asaert, A. De Vos, G. Devos and F. Suykens, *Antwerpen und Deutschland: Eine historische Darstellung beider Beziehungen vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart*, (Antwerp: Publitra, 1990), 26–27.

⁷⁴ ARA, *Grote Raad voor de Nederlanden te Mechelen* 837, Processen en Sententiën. 30 June 1537, 400–409.

⁷⁵ L. van der Essen, 'Le progrès du luthéranisme et du calvinisme dans le monde commercial d'Anvers et l'espionnage politique du marchand Philippe Dauxy, agent secret de Marguerite de Parme, en 1566–1567,' *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 12 (1914): 154.

⁷⁶ R.P. Zijp, 'De lutheranen in de Lage Landen,' *Spiegel Historiae* 18 (1983): 626.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 628.

according to the Augsburg Confession because so many of the Lutheran young people who came to Antwerp to learn the arts of commerce were listening to Calvinist preaching,⁷⁸ but beyond this little can be said about Germans and the religious life of Antwerp.

Patterns of German Settlement

The English and Hanse merchant nations in Antwerp enjoyed not only various privileges and freedoms within the city, they each established 'houses' for their merchants. These establishments served as both official offices of the nation, and also as temporary residences while merchants were in the city. Merchants who were members of the several Italian nations, on the other hand, purchased or leased houses in the city to serve as their residences and offices. The Portuguese had a house for their nation, but most merchants probably purchased or leased houses like the Italians. The South Germans followed the Italian example, purchasing or leasing houses in various areas of the city. They do not seem to have ever had a High German house along the lines of the English or Hansards.

As in most other commercial towns of northern Europe, the typical merchant house in Antwerp had several storage rooms and a cellar; the family conducted business and lived on an upper floor. More substantial houses may also have included warehouses, stables, and so forth. The Fuggers acquired a large house on the *Steenhouwersvest* fairly early in the sixteenth century; the Welsers and Hochstetters purchased houses somewhat later. Merchants associated with the Fuggers, Hochstetters, Welsers, etc. would probably have stayed, at least temporarily, in the houses belonging to these South German families. For instance, not long after the Fuggers acquired their house in Antwerp, one of their factors, Wolfgang Haller, had a loan contract drawn up with another German in the Fugger house where Haller was staying.⁷⁹

German merchants seem to have preferred to live in neighborhoods near other Germans. By Antwerp's period of greatest economic growth (1540–1560) this clustering became even more pronounced than in

⁷⁸ L. van der Essen, 'Le progrès du luthéranisme et du calvinisme dans le monde commercial d'Anvers,' 162.

⁷⁹ Jacob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, no. 3, 12.

earlier decades. The Fugger house was one of the points around which German merchants located. Unlike the agents and factors of the great firms, most merchants needed to purchase or rent houses on an individual basis. Even a merchant of less renown than those associated with the great firms might purchase a large place. In 1532, for instance, Wolf Puschinger rented a substantial house including two *pakhuizen* (a type of warehouse where goods could be stored and prepared before sale) on the *Meir*, not far from the site of the new Bourse.⁸⁰ Although Puschinger was the Antwerp agent of the Hans Herwart firm of Augsburg through the 1550s, Hans's two sons, Hans Paulus and Hans Heinrich, became very active in Antwerp's financial markets in the second half of the sixteenth century, and seem not to have had any dealings with Puschinger's heirs. These younger Herwarts bought two houses on the *Ridderstraat* in 1556, one called the *Roos*, and the other called the *Kalf met de Wieg*.⁸¹

German merchants also initially located near the major markets for the products in which they were dealing. For instance, they located on the old Grain Market (*Oude Koornmarkt*) where the Hanse house had been established decades earlier, and also in the new Grain Market (*Brabant Koornmarkt*). The Leipzig merchant Wolf Reitweiser bought a house with several out-buildings called the *Sint Merck* on the *Ijzerenwaag* in 1531 from his father-in-law, the Antwerp merchant Markus Musch.⁸² The *Ijzerenwaag* was the traditional site of the iron and copper trade.⁸³ The *Vrijdagmarkt* (just north of the Fugger house) also formed a focal point for Germans, as did the new Bourse after it was established in 1532 near the *Meir*.

German merchants were also perpetuating these 'German neighborhoods' by selling and renting houses to each other or purchasing houses near each other. Lazarus Tucher had a house on the *Keiserstraat* next to the house of Mathias Manlich.⁸⁴ Based on the sketchy evidence available, it would seem that German merchants preferred to locate near each other whenever possible. This certainly does not mean that German merchants only moved within German circles.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁸¹ Ibid., 377.

⁸² SAA, Collectanea 3, 15 June 1531, f° 235. See also the reference in SAA, Schepenbrieven 184, January 3, 1533, f° 309–309v.

⁸³ Robert van de Weghe, *Geschiedenis van de Antwerpse Straatnamen*, 227.

⁸⁴ SAA, *Schepenbrieven* 183, 21 March 1533, f° 539v–540.

Antwerp was, of course, an international market and world entrepôt and Germans were in daily contact with other foreign merchants. Loans, exchanges and deals were routinely made with merchants from all parts of Europe often in houses associated with the Germans.⁸⁵

* * *

The great South German merchants came to Antwerp to sell the metals and other products of southern German and central European origin and to purchase the high value foreign goods such as spices and textiles. Scores of German workers flocked to the city to make their fortune, many plying trades that would have been in much demand in a city oriented toward the re-export trade. German merchants used organizational forms familiar to merchants all over Europe, and Germans were able to become part of the public life of the city through association with the High German Nation.

The experience of German merchants as they associated with other merchants in Antwerp, and as they enjoyed the city's social opportunities, tells only part of their story. Commercial relations extended beyond the nation structure in sixteenth-century Antwerp and beyond the city itself. Merchants were able to insert themselves into world-wide trading networks that converged on Antwerp. It was through these networks that German merchants distributed the products of the world to central and southern Europe, and through which they offered their native products to world-wide markets. The next chapters consider some of these networks and look at the kinds of products the German merchants were most apt to buy and sell.

⁸⁵ Jacob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 40, no. 35, 148, nos. 203 and 204.

PART II

COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

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CHAPTER FIVE

COMMERCE AND URBAN NETWORKS

Theories addressing how urban systems and urban networks have functioned in history are not in short supply. Beginning at least with Walter Christaller's theory, first published as *Die Zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland* in 1933, many scholars have looked for overarching theories meant to explain how cities have interacted primarily on an economic level, as well as to explain how cities function as networks on a political level.¹ Theories that cast the city as a central place, a node on a network, or a gateway all offer interesting ways to understand the function of the city. Scholars continue to debate and refine the issue, and offer convincing proof of the value of these theoretical approaches.

Walter Christaller's theory of the centrality of urban places has traditionally been the starting point for most discussions of urban networks. Christaller suggested that towns and cities serve as the central places for their regions, and that a hierarchy of cities and regions could be observed. Christaller said that towns could be ranked based on their size and more importantly, on the kinds of goods or services the cities could market to their hinterlands. A minimum demand for a certain product or service would need to be present for it to be available in a particular city. The factors most important in determining the position of a city within the hierarchy included population and available goods and services.

Most scholars today, while they may admire Christaller's ideas on a theoretical level, do not find much utility in his central place theory based on product marketing and distribution.² The model assumes an even, flat plan, uninterrupted by geographical hindrances, as well

¹ For an excellent example of the ways historians conceptualize urban networks in a variety of ways see Walter Prevenier, Jean-Pierre Sosson, and Marc Boone, 'Le Réseau urbain en Flandre (XIII^e–XIX^e siècle): Composantes et Dynamique,' in *Le Réseau Urbain en Belgique dans une Perspective Historique*, Proceedings of the 15th International Colloquium, 1990, (Brussels: Crédit Communal, 1992), 157–200.

² Harold Carter, *The Study of Urban Geography*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 138–139.

as a uniform population distribution—none of which occur naturally. Still, Christaller's theory has continued to be the starting point for much of the discussion on urban systems for the past several decades.

Two schools of thought seem to have developed with regard to the usefulness of Christaller's theory for the economic historian. Both find it useful in historical analysis, but for very different reasons. One sees it useful for the debate that it engenders and for the revisions that its analysis yields,³ while the other sees the strength of the central place theory in the ideas it presents of cities being part of complex systems of exchange.⁴

While Christaller's marketing principle has become well known to historical geographers, one of the most interesting uses of his theory considers the much less well-known issue of the traffic principle. Rather than focusing on marketing goods, the traffic principle suggests that the ideal urban system has many central places arrayed along a straight route between two important cities.⁵ Tom Scott stressed the importance of the traffic principle in his investigation of the urban networks of the upper Rhine. In order to explain the rank-order of the towns along the Rhine, with Strasbourg as the focal point, using Christaller's traffic principle, Scott considered things like population size, economic activity within the town, range of the economic activities of townsfolk, and the provision of capital.⁶ Scott admits, however, that despite the predictive power of Christaller's models, they have a built-in rigidity that begs for "additional tools of analysis" such as the network theory proposed by Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees.⁷

Hohenberg and Lees propose that two different systems interact to explain the dynamic process of urbanization; the central place system, and what they call the network trading system.⁸ The network trading model describes cities as part of a long distance, international trading system. Cities act as nodes on, and gateways to, the trading network. As a result, this model implies a more linear distribution

³ David Miller, 'Social History Update: Spatial Analysis and Social History,' *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990): 213–219.

⁴ Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000–1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 50.

⁵ Tom Scott, *Regional Identity and Economic Change: The Upper Rhine, 1450–1600*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 78–79.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 80–81.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 98–99.

⁸ Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe*, 59.

rather than the tight hexagonal grouping of the central places usually associated with Christaller's model. Hohenberg and Lees suggest that most large cities have a place in both models, being both center places to their regions, and nodes on the wider trading networks.⁹

Several researchers have found utility in this dualistic model of urban relationships. Pim Kooij, for example, determined that this dualistic approach, where the analysis focuses on central place systems on the regional level, and trading networks on the international level was the most useful for an examination of Dutch cities in the periphery.¹⁰ More recently, David Nicholas's study of medieval Flemish economic development has yielded results consistent with Hohenberg and Lees's dualistic system approach.¹¹ Nicholas was particularly interested in the dynamic nature of Hohenberg and Lees's construct, where initially small cities could become more important on the trading network than ones that were previously the more dominant.

Hohenberg and Lees account for this dynamic, almost fluid nature of cities—central places becoming centers on the trading network, and large trading centers potentially declining to smaller central places as conditions change over time—by their observation of the cyclical nature of urban-rural interdependence. They suggest that over the long term, economic dominance fluctuates between rural and urban periods. In this way cities become primarily central places during periods of rural dominance, but act more as trading network centers engaged in long distance exchange during times of urban ascendancy and dominance.¹²

Based on the model constructed by Hohenberg and Lees, during the sixteenth century, Antwerp was certainly a gateway to central Europe for the products of an emerging global trade network. Simply defined a gateway city is "an entrance into (and necessarily an exit out of) some area."¹³

⁹ Ibid., 79; Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, 'Urban Decline and Regional Economies in Brabant, Castile, and Lombardy, 1550–1750,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989): 456.

¹⁰ Pim Kooij, 'Peripheral Cities and their Regions in the Dutch Urban System until 1900,' *The Journal of Economic History* 48 (1988): 358.

¹¹ David Nicholas, 'Of Poverty and Primacy: Demand, Liquidity, and the Flemish Economic Miracle, 1050–1200,' *American Historical Review* 96 (1991): 40.

¹² Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe*, 117.

¹³ A.F. Burghardt, 'A Hypothesis about Gateway Cities,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 61 (1971): 269.

In some respects Antwerp could be viewed economically as a central place for the entire continent during the sixteenth century. Applying Fernand Braudel's idea of urban catchment areas to Antwerp would yield a sphere of influence far beyond even the Italian commercial cities like Venice and Genoa.¹⁴ Antwerp's reach was probably the greatest of any early modern European city.

Unfortunately, static models of the type conceptualized by Christaller, or even the more fluid theories of Hohenberg and Lees, which attempt to demonstrate urban hierarchies and geographical connections (such as gateway cities and central places), too often ignore the role of the merchant in trade. James Murray has recently raised this complaint and has responded by suggesting that artificial neural networks (e.g. the internet) are better conceptual devices to employ when considering the character of trade networks.¹⁵

Certainly by the middle of the sixteenth century it was large numbers of merchants through their use of the overland routes connecting the North Sea with the Mediterranean who linked Europe's commercial centers and created new connections for trade across the continent. The importance of German merchants, in particular, for the development of north-south commercial connections can not be overstated.¹⁶ Antwerp's merchants adapted to changing market conditions fairly quickly and made use of a variety of trade routes and commercial techniques in order to ensure their success.

Plotting the commercial networks that individual merchants and merchant firms set up is a difficult task, but the data to be presented in this book can offer a starting place for understanding which market towns were important for merchants. Often this was based on the products merchants were most apt to exchange. Lisbon often figured prominently in the commercial networks established by merchants involved in the pepper trade. Likewise, London was an important place for merchants trading in English textiles.

Merchant manuals can provide some information on the networks merchants constructed based on the market centers they highlight.

¹⁴ See Braudel's discussion of Nuremberg in Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, 188–189.

¹⁵ James Murray, 'Of Nodes and Networks,' 2–3.

¹⁶ Herman van der Wee, 'Structural changes in European long-distance trade, and particularly in the re-export trade from south to north, 1350–1750,' in *The Rise of Merchant Empires*, edited by James D. Tracy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14–33.

Fernand Braudel used Hermann Kellenbenz's edition of the *Handelsbuch* by Lorenz Meder to illustrate the idea of 'catchment areas.' A catchment area is one way to look at the strength of the commercial connections between trading towns and the reach of important commercial cities.¹⁷ While Braudel used the example of Nuremberg, the town at the center of Meder's manual, applying the idea to Antwerp would yield a sphere of influence greater than any other European city of its day. Beyond figuring catchment areas, merchant manuals also provide data about the most heavily used trade networks.

Willem van de Lare was an Antwerp merchant who had spent some time engaged in trade in Lisbon during the 1520s. By the late 1520s he had written a little manual on how to figure weight and price conversions for the trade in various products between the most important European commercial cities of the day: Antwerp, Nuremberg, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Lyons, Paris, and Venice.¹⁸ There were many other important trading centers in sixteenth-century Europe, but these were certainly the most important as far as Antwerp merchants were concerned, and as a result they formed the core of van de Lare's examples.

Van de Lare's manual does not seem to have ever been published and it is not entirely certain if he intended for it to be published. He wrote his manual as a kind of workbook to teach the techniques of exchange necessary for the aspiring long-distance merchant. In the opening lines of the manual van de Lare says that it presents a "rule whereby men might find and calculate . . . the value, weight and size of all sorts of goods that they exchange between one land and another."¹⁹

Van de Lare only mentioned certain products, which he associated with a few key cities. Because his handbook concerned figuring exchange between cities, van de Lare gives a glimpse into the trade networks based on products. For example, Van de Lare seems to have observed that the European pepper trade was concentrated in Lisbon,

¹⁷ Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, 188–190.

¹⁸ Plantin-Moretus Museum Archives, *Grand Livre de Commerce de Willem van de Lare*, manuscript, ca. 1527.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1. "Ise een reghel daer men met vinden ende calculeren mach/ van alderhanden coopmanscapen/ diemen transportert van eenen landt in een ander. Hoe dat die zelve coopmanscapen na tghewichte, mate oft ghetale. Ende der resolutien der pennighen oft ghelde der landen des incoops/ ghelenert costen inden landen alde men die transportert na het wicht, mate, oft ghetale ende der resolutien der pennighen oft ghelde daermen in die landen daer men transportert . . ."

Antwerp, Lyon, Nuremberg, Venice, with Frankfurt and Paris forming a secondary network. This conclusion is based on his treatment of the exchange in pepper between Lisbon and Antwerp; Lisbon and Lyon; Antwerp and Lyon; Lyon and Nuremberg or Frankfurt; Antwerp and Nuremberg; Venice and Nuremberg; Antwerp and Paris; and Frankfurt and Paris. The copper trade network was much less complicated. Van de Lare mentions only the trade in copper between Nuremberg or Frankfurt and Antwerp or Aachen; and between Antwerp and Lisbon.

Another way to determine the kinds of merchant networks created in sixteenth century Antwerp is to scour the account books of individual firms. The Haug-Langenauer-Link firm of Augsburg operated out of Augsburg, Nuremberg, Ulm, Antwerp, Cologne, and Venice. The relative importance of each of these cities for the firm changed over time with Antwerp increasing in importance vis à vis the other cities from 1533 to 1545.²⁰

Regardless of the way scholars choose to conceptualize commercial networks, by the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp was at once a commercial gateway to Europe, a node on a far-flung trade network, and a central place for its hinterland. More importantly, it was home to large numbers of merchants, who fitted the city into their particular, and often shifting, trading networks.

Shifting Patterns of Long-Distance Trade

By the opening of the sixteenth century the various commercial zones within Europe had already experienced a fair degree of integration thanks in large part to the success of seaborne trade in the Mediterranean, Atlantic coastal regions and the North Sea/Baltic area. But the history of European commercial networks is not a story of linear progression leading ultimately to the dominance of seaborne trade by the early modern period. The transport of goods within Europe, and particularly between the North Sea towns of the Low Countries and the Italian cities on the Mediterranean, shifted cyclically between seaborne trade and overland trade. Echoing Hohenberg and Lees's cyclical representation of the shift between rural and

²⁰ SA, Literalien (3:106), *Handelsbuch von Anton Haug, Hans Langenauer, Ulrich Link, 1532–1549*. fo. 27 verso and 98 verso.

urban dominance in the economy, there occurred a long-term shift in the emphasis in Europe's long-distance trade pattern from overland based trade in the thirteenth century to an emphasis on seaborne trade by the fourteenth century on into the fifteenth century, and back to overland based trade by the second half of the fifteenth century continuing into the sixteenth century.²¹

With the late-medieval de-emphasis on overland trade, merchants from Mediterranean port cities like Genoa and Venice carried out most of the commercial contact between the North Sea and the Mediterranean by sending their goods over the sea lanes. While they may have concentrated their activities in the Mediterranean, medieval Italian merchants using maritime transport were also regular participants in northern markets. North Sea merchants, on the other hand, were not as quick to sail to the south. Not until the end of the fifteenth century did English ships bring trade goods to Italian commercial cities, and these voyages were likely not a regular occurrence.²² Most northern merchants who wanted to participate in the southern trade had to either rely on the Italians, or focus their efforts on the overland trade that, in sixteenth-century Antwerp, was dominated by Germans.

The medieval Champagne fairs are probably the most well-known example illustrating this kind of shift from overland to maritime trade. These fairs formed a bridge between the cloth producing towns of the Low Countries and the spice markets of the Mediterranean. Many scholars suggest that the Champagne fair cycle came into being because of the position of the four main fair cities on the long-standing north-south overland routes.²³ Henri Pirenne went so far as to suggest that the Champagne fairs were essentially the mid-way point between Bruges and Venice.²⁴ It is possible that location had a lot to do with the initial popularity of the fairs. The institutions that emerged to cater to merchant needs and their attendant affects on

²¹ Peter Spufford raised this issue, at least for the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, in a conference paper, 'Transaction Costs and the Changing Pattern of Trade in Late Medieval Europe.' Presented at the Economic History Society meeting in Birmingham (UK) on 6 April, 2002.

²² David Loades, *England's Maritime Empire: Seapower, Commerce and Policy, 1490-1690*, (London: Longman, 2000), 31.

²³ Elizabeth Chapin, *Les villes de foires de Champagne*, (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1937), 225-226. Chapin points out that proximity to trade routes was coupled with self-interested intervention by the counts.

²⁴ Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities*, 105.

transaction costs gave the fairs staying power. From the twelfth century to the late thirteenth century the fair towns were the most important nodes on a vibrant trade network between the north and south.

To state that the decline of the fairs came about solely because of the increased use of the sea route from the Mediterranean to the North Sea by Italian merchants in the thirteenth century is too simplistic an explanation. The character of the fairs moved more toward financial centers rather than commercial centers by the opening years of the fourteenth century.²⁵ By then, Italians had begun to bypass the overland trade routes in favor of transport by sea. With the de-emphasis of overland trade focused on fairs like those at Champagne, merchants from Mediterranean port cities like Genoa and Venice sending their goods over the sea lanes initiated most commercial contact between the North Sea and the Mediterranean.

Traditional views of the economic changes that occurred around the turn of the sixteenth century suggest that the center of economic activity in Europe shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic/North Sea area; from Italy to the Low Countries.²⁶ Along these lines, Venice is supposed to have lost its preeminent place in the European economy to Antwerp as the result of a shift from a Mediterranean-based economy to the new Atlantic economy. Portugal's activities in opening the sea route to India precipitated this shift according some accounts.²⁷ But the long involvement of Italian cities in the northern economy did not simply end with the opening of the Atlantic trade route to India toward the end of the fifteenth century. Nor did the instigation of oceanic voyages by Iberians stop the shift from seaborne to overland trade.

Scholars of the Venetian economy have been quick to point out that the Venetian economy did not go into decline until the seventeenth century, so this shift to overland trade, whatever its cause, had little affect on Venetian prosperity. What has been described as a decrease in importance for Venice really amounted to a decrease in the num-

²⁵ Wallace K. Ferguson, 'Recent Trends in the Economic Historiography of the Renaissance,' *Studies in the Renaissance*, 7 (1960): 17. See also the essay by Robert Bautier, 'Les Foires de Champagne,' in *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, vol. 7, La Foire, (Brussels: Editions de la Librairie Encyclopédique, 1953), 97-145.

²⁶ Hermann Kellenbenz, *The Rise of the European Economy*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 134.

²⁷ See Braudel for example.

ber of Venetian ships sailing the sea route to northern Europe. For its part, Antwerp did not have much of a merchant marine; it relied on the maritime potential of others, like the Hanseatic League, the Portuguese, the English, and to a lesser extent some of the Italian cities. So Antwerp's rise did not depend on an increase in its ability to field a merchant marine, and Venice's decline had little to do with its exit from the seaborne trade with northern Europe.

While Venice remained an important port for goods from Adriatic and Aegean origin, and other Mediterranean ports as well, Venetian seaborne trade outside the Mediterranean had fallen off substantially.²⁸ By about the middle of the sixteenth century Italian shipping out of the port of Antwerp seems to have ground to a halt. The one per cent export tax records of 1543–45 indicate that only one shipment of goods going to any Italian town (in this case Genoa) left Antwerp by sea.²⁹ This shift from seaborne to overland trade can not be used as evidence that the prosperity of Venice was in danger by the opening years of the sixteenth century. As Richard Rapp has rightly pointed out loss of hegemony does not equal loss of prosperity.³⁰

What explains this shift in emphasis from seaborne to overland routes for the north-south trade between the North Sea and the Mediterranean? Any discussion of structural change in commerce would be incomplete without some attention paid to transaction costs. Despite the consideration scholars have given to seaborne trade in the sixteenth century, overland trade must have had lower transaction costs in general for merchants to have made this shift. Several factors came into play that made seaborne trade more costly and overland trade more attractive to sixteenth century merchants.

Piracy was particularly onerous in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Aside from the increase in Mediterranean piracy, the problem was on the rise in the North Sea as well. Despite the best efforts of the Spanish fleet of Granada in combating Mediterranean piracy,

²⁸ Gino Luzzatto, *An Economic History of Italy*, translated by Philip Jones, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), 152.

²⁹ W. Brulez, 'L'exportation des Pays-Bas vers l'Italie par voie de terre au milieu du XVI^e siècle,' 461–492.

³⁰ Richard Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline in Seventeenth-Century Venice*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 4.

pirate groups operated routinely out of Algiers and even Malta.³¹ The danger of piracy in the Mediterranean had a negative effect on the shipping activities of Venice as the sixteenth century wore on, with a resulting clear preference for overland routes. In the north, piracy or rather privateering often blocked access to the Atlantic coastal trade routes.

Animosity between the Habsburgs and the Valois were one cause for the disruption of sea lanes. Despite the huge volume of cloths sent across the North Sea from England to Antwerp, some ships fell prey to French attacks. A typical example tells of a shipment of fine white English cloths that had left London toward the end of August 1545 only to be seized by French troops.³² Likewise, privateers harassed French goods destined for Antwerp even when there was no war between the Habsburgs and Valois. A Scottish warship detained a Breton ship carrying a cargo of pastels from Bordeaux to Antwerp in February 1546 with the intention of seizing the goods. The Scottish captain only relented after an on-board factor gave him evidence that the goods belonged to Flemish, Spanish, and Portuguese merchants.³³

Of course the overland route was not without danger. Banditry was commonplace along the main trade routes from Antwerp to the south. But overall the land routes were much safer. Local lords routinely offered guarantees of safe conduct to merchants passing through their territories. This gave merchants at least some recourse to law.³⁴ But an astute teamster might do much to deter bandits himself.

In the end, however, merchants chose which method of transport would be most effective, and which business techniques were least costly. It is quite possible that the foreign merchant nations' reluctance to give up the ancient privileges they had won before the fifteenth century in favor of commercial relationships more appropriate for the sixteenth-century business climate hindered the most profitable forms of commerce. The Genoese Nation's privileges dealt almost

³¹ See the discussions of various aspects of Mediterranean piracy in E. Mira Caballos, 'La armada del reino de Granada (1492–1550): Apuntes para su historia,' *Revista de Historia Naval* 18 (2000): 35–54; Pierre Boyer, 'Les renégats et la marine de la régence d'Alger,' *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 39 (1985): 93–106; Alain Blondy, 'L'ordre de Saint-Jean et l'essor économique de Malte, 1530–1798,' *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 71 (1994): 75–90.

³² SAA, Certificatieboek 6, 21 November 1545, f° 181.

³³ SAA, Certificatieboek 6, March 1546, f° 238.

³⁴ SAA, Certificatieboek, 1, 3 June 1488, f° 3v.

exclusively with the concerns of maritime merchants, yet few Genoese availed themselves of the sea routes by the middle of the sixteenth century. South German merchants seem to have eschewed all privileges in favor of the freedom to act without the kinds of constraints that privileged groups placed on their members.

Overland Trade Routes and Tolls

Some merchants sent their cargo to Germany by the inland water routes, but overland transport was usually faster. Barge traffic up the Rhine took the goods on a detour through the northern Netherlands and required the boat to travel against the current. Eventually goods on the river had to be unloaded and sent over land routes to get to their ultimate destinations. The Frammersbach transporter Coens Frans left Antwerp about 19 August 1542 hauling merchandise to Augsburg for Joris Schorer and Lenard Helman. By 11 December 1542 he was again back in Antwerp loading the goods destined for Frankfurt belonging to the merchants Henrick Wickstetter and Joost Glaiser. Assuming a one week lay-over, the round-trip voyage took about four months.³⁵

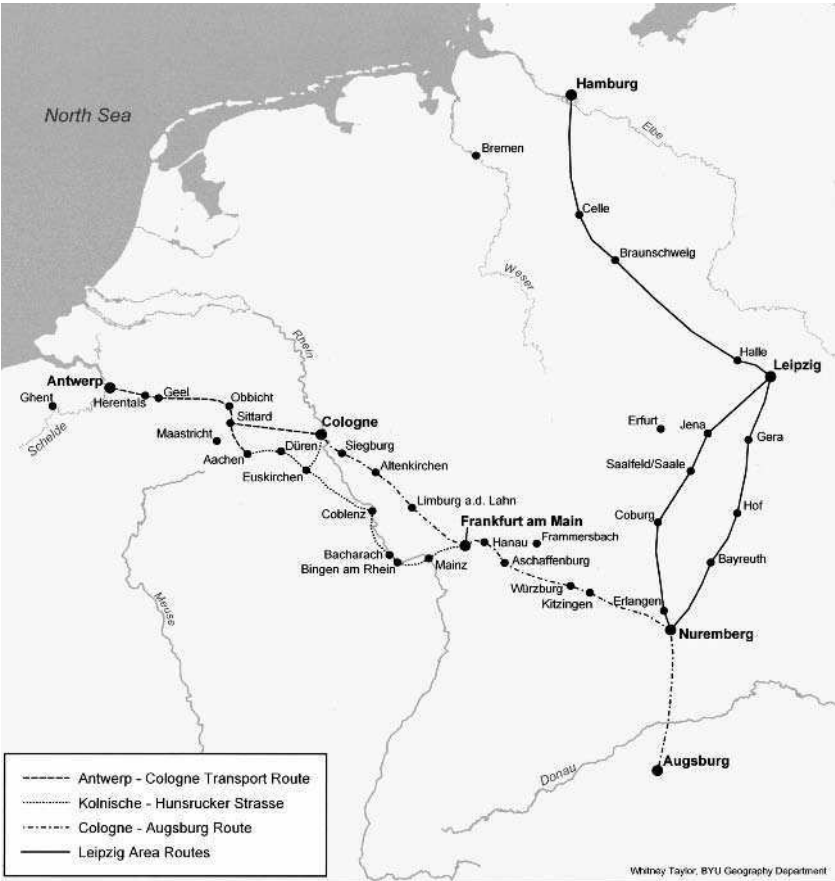
Although Cologne and Aachen were also Hanse towns, they served as important sites for overland through traffic to southern German towns.³⁶ The most traveled overland route between Antwerp and Germany was known as the *Keulse baan* or Cologne highway. It ran roughly from Antwerp through Deurne–Herentals–Geel–Balen–Stokkem–Obbicht–Sittard to Aachen or Cologne, and took about ten to twenty days to travel (see Map 2).³⁷ Due to the high volume of traffic going to and from Germany, this route contributed to perhaps the largest share of the Brabant land toll revenues even though it had the fewest toll stations along its length than other possible routes.³⁸

³⁵ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 19 August 1542, f° 151v; December 11, 1542, f° 172v.

³⁶ Floris Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen*, vol. 7, 152.

³⁷ W. Brulez, *De Firma della Faille en de Internationale Handel van Vlaamse Firma's in de 16^e Eeuw*, (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1959), 414.

³⁸ Filip Vermeylen, 'In de ban van Antwerpen: De Kempen in de zestiende eeuw,' *Taxandria: Jaarboek van de Koninklijke Geschied- en Oudheidkundige Kring van de Antwerpse Kempen*, 63 (1991): 231–232.



Map 2. Antwerp and the Overland Trade Routes to Central Europe

From Cologne merchants and transporters might choose any of a number of routes to the south. Of principal importance was the Cologne–Siegburg–Altenkirchen–Limburg a.d. Lahn–Frankfurt am Main–Hanau–Aschaffenburg–Würzburg–Kitzingen route to Nuremberg or Augsburg.³⁹ This leg of the trip from Antwerp to Augsburg could last four or five weeks.⁴⁰ The proximity of Frammersbach to this northerly route explains in large part why freight transporters of that city played such an important role in the transport industry from Antwerp to Germany from an early date.

An alternate route from Frankfurt am Main to Cologne used the *Kölnisch-Hunsrücker* (or *Linksrheinische*) *Straße* from Frankfurt to Mainz–Bingen–Bacharach am Rhein–Waldesch–Coblenz–Euskirchen to Cologne or to Düren–Aachen–Maastricht to Antwerp.⁴¹ But not all goods necessarily passed through Cologne on the way to southern German lands. When Henrick Wickstetter and Joost Glaiser, merchants of Frankfurt sent fifty-two barrels of herring and salmon to Germany in 1542, the wagons were sent first to Aachen and then on to Frankfurt for shipment elsewhere in “hoochduytslant.”⁴² From Cologne or Frankfurt goods could be shipped to various parts of southern and eastern Germany. Because of its busy fair, Frankfurt, more than Cologne, was the nodal point for the entire north/south German trade network.⁴³

To be sure, not all of the merchants sent their goods to Germany exclusively by overland transport. Some of the larger merchant concerns made use of North Sea/Baltic transportation routes even for goods destined well within Germany. For example, Wolf Puschinger sent nine packs of cloth from Antwerp to Hamburg and from there overland to Leipzig.⁴⁴ The route from Hamburg to Leipzig passed through Celle, Braunschweig, and Halle. Leipzig was well positioned for transshipping merchandise from North Sea and Baltic port towns to southern German cities.⁴⁵

³⁹ G. Asaert, et al., *Antwerpen und Deutschland*, 33.

⁴⁰ W. Brulez, *De Firma della Faille*, 414.

⁴¹ Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, vol. 3. 325.

⁴² SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 7 December 1542, f° 171v.

⁴³ Floris Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen*, vol. 7, 152.

⁴⁴ SAA, Certificatieboek 7, 20 June 1552, f° 141.

⁴⁵ Hermann Kellenbenz, ‘Landverkehr, Fluss- und Seeschifffahrt im Europäischen Handel (Spätmittelalter-Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts),’ *Les grandes voies maritimes dans le monde, XV^e–XIX^e siècles* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1965), 128–129.

Leipzig's status as a fair town made it even more favorable as a destination for goods traveling to the eastern parts of Central Europe.⁴⁶ Two routes from Leipzig to Nuremberg were commonly used. The *Geleitsstraße* went from Nuremberg to Erlangen–Coburg–Judenbach–Gräfenal–Saalfeld–Jena–Leipzig, and the *Landstraße* went from Nuremberg to Bayreuth–Hof–Gera to Leipzig.⁴⁷ Leipzig's position on the *Frankfurt-Leipziger Hohe Straße* between Erfurt and Breslau also made it an important transshipment center for goods destined farther east in Europe.

Tolls were often a problem for the freight transporters who were required to pay these fees beginning at the Antwerp gates and at various points all the way to the final destination of the goods being shipped. Disputes often arose between the freight transporters and the toll collectors, which in some cases escalated to the point where they were brought before the city council of Antwerp. Indeed in response to an overzealous toll collector at the Antwerp gate, thirty Hessian and Frammersbach freight transporters complained about toll collectors overcharging the gate toll.⁴⁸ The usual toll was 5 stuivers per horse,⁴⁹ but the toll collector was charging 7½ stuivers per horse. Rather than argue most freight transporters often just paid the higher toll, but when the toll collectors began demanding extra payments, such as a toll per wagon in addition to the charge for each horse, the freight transporters had had enough. This situation was so onerous that the transporters related the story of a certain freighter whose *kerre* (cart) of goods destined for Cologne, on which he paid the toll, broke down. When the transporter transferred the goods to a wagon, the toll collectors came after him and demanded payment for a wagon of goods which was different from that for a *kerre*.⁵⁰

The fact that many German merchants, including the Fugger and Welser firms, provided information on the case to Jakob van Wesenbeke, the city treasurer, highlights the significance of both this toll collection dispute and the influence freight transporters had on the German merchants. As a result of this dispute, the city magis-

⁴⁶ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁷ Alexander Dietz, *Frankfurter Handelsgeschichte*, vol. 3, 332.

⁴⁸ SAA, T-1208b Schulden, 1550, (loose pages).

⁴⁹ The stuiver was a common silver coin equaling 2 Flemish *grooten*. Peter Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1986), 228. See also my appendix on Money.

⁵⁰ SAA, T-1208b.

trates reiterated the rules for the collection of tolls at the Antwerp city gates: 1) an official would be appointed to control the bills of lading of goods going to Germany checking the name of the freighter and the number of horses; 2) the freighter was to give this bill to the toll keeper or his collector and pay 5 stuivers per horse and no more; 3) the freighter was then to be passed through the toll; 4) freighters coming into the city were likewise to give a letter with the freighter's name and how many horses he had, and they were also to pay only 5 stuivers per horse.

By the sixteenth century German merchants had developed quite a system of trading privileges and toll exemptions. Nuremberg merchants obtained extensive trading privileges including some toll exemptions from Ghent, Ieper, and Bruges as early as 1362.⁵¹ Philip the Good granted the merchants of Nuremberg an exemption from the land tolls as early as December 1433 which was similar to the one they had obtained in Flanders.⁵² Aachen's merchants enjoyed a long standing toll exemption and so did Cologne's, although the exemptions extended to Cologne merchants were limited to goods accompanied by the merchant.⁵³ Not surprisingly merchants jealously guarded these privileges,⁵⁴ and Antwerp toll collectors fought just as hard to eliminate abuse.

Hartman Schmaltz of Ansbach, who was acting as the Antwerp factor of William Smitmer of Nuremberg, was stopped at the *Kipdorp* gate and told that he could not pass without paying the toll. He explained that the two packs of cloth he was transporting belonged to Smitmer of Nuremberg, and that goods belonging to Nuremberg merchants could pass free of toll. The toll collector would not give in and Schmaltz did pay the toll, but only under protest.⁵⁵ In any event, Schmaltz obtained Antwerp citizenship on 16 April 1540 thereby

⁵¹ Gerhard Hirschmann, 'Nürnberg's Handelsprivilegien, Zollfreiheiten und Zollverträge bis 1399,' in *Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Nürnbergs*, vol. 1, (Nuremberg: Stadtrat Nürnberg, 1967), 28–30.

⁵² SAA, Tresorij 818, *Tollen*, 15th–18th Century, (loose pages), Vrijheid van Tollen—Nuremberg.

⁵³ SAA, Tresorij 806, *Tolboek*, f° 48v.

⁵⁴ SAA, Certificatieboek 17, 1561, f° 203, "Certificamus dat alle poorters van Nuremberg gelyck oock alle poorters van Antwerpen altyt zyn geweest en oock gehouden geweest en oock alnoch zyn en gehouden worden vry van allen tollén Ende dat de selve poorters van Nuremberg aengaen de voirß vryheyt yn in vredelicke en penselicke possessie sonder andgelyt."

⁵⁵ SAA, N-2070 Notarial Record, 's Hertoghen Sr., 1536, f° 2.

insuring that he would thereafter be exempt from the same tolls.⁵⁶

Passing the Antwerp gate and paying the tolls along the trade route was only part of what a freight transporter or merchant might have to endure on the long journey to Germany. Highway robbery was also something with which the freight transporter might have to contend. In April 1559 four freight transporters from Frammersbach, Balthazar Winter, Hans Frans, Hans Gosmans, and Hans Bortman, were transporting the goods of various German merchants from Nuremberg to Antwerp when their wagons were stopped by eleven or twelve riders who made off with the goods.

Balthazar Winter, who at the age of fifty was likely quite experienced and well known along the trade route, paid a visit to the local nobleman complaining that these criminals were loose in his county. The Count mounted a search and found the robbers in a local inn where his men recovered the wagons, horses, and goods.⁵⁷ For the most part, though, the trip to Germany was probably rather uneventful and fairly routine once the ins and outs of the business were learned.

South German Merchants and Seaborne Trade

It is difficult to see South German participation in the emerging early modern sea-based economy because the Germans were most heavily involved in overland transportation of goods, not in the seaborne trade that was more oriented to the Atlantic and which has been the focus of so many historians' work.⁵⁸ Germans, however, were very much a part of the overseas economy as well as the overland trade between Antwerp and Germany. Certainly the Hanse focused as it was on the North Sea and the Baltic cannot be overlooked in this regard. But because the land-based economy of southern Germany was in no position to develop a merchant marine, South Germans had to rely on the seaborne potential of others in order to participate in this trade.

⁵⁶ SAA, Antwerpse Poortersboeken, 16 April 1540.

⁵⁷ SAA, Certificatieboek 14, f° 73v ff.

⁵⁸ For the purposes of this study the Hanseatic League, with its almost exclusive interest in the Baltic and with its reluctance to contract with non-member merchants, is omitted from consideration as an arm of German overseas commerce. An argument could be made, however, that the Hanse was involved in Atlantic trade just as the non-Hanseatic Germans were by virtue of the goods they traded in at Antwerp.

Despite the fact that South Germans found themselves unable to compete with the seaborne power of the Spanish and Portuguese, some German merchants tried to take an active rather than a passive role in the Atlantic overseas trade. For the most part Germans brought their goods to Antwerp and there traded them for the goods brought to the city by Iberian, English, and Italian merchants. A few enterprising Germans, however, likely recognized the possibility that higher profits could be realized by shipping their goods themselves to their ultimate destinations. The merchant firm Joachim Pruner, Kilian Reitweiser and Company routinely hired entire vessels from the shippers of Holland and Zeeland to send their goods to San Lúcar de Barrameda (the port of Seville). Pruner (a merchant from Berlin) and Reitweiser (from a Leipzig merchant family) were quite active in Antwerp during the first half of the sixteenth century, until Kilian Reitweiser died about 1550. In July 1525 Pruner hired the ship *Sint Joorys* from its master Thomas Piettersen. Although the hire contract does not specify what goods the firm shipped to Andalusia, it does indicate that Pruner was required to either fill the ship or pay the same fees as if the ship were full.⁵⁹ Only a week or so later Pruner again arranged for transport to San Lúcar, this time hiring two ships. One was named the *Leon de Zierikzee*, belonging to the Zeeland shipper, Anton Mulock, and the other ship, named the *Noel van Zierickzee*, belonged to a certain Lamprecht. Mulock was to stay in San Lúcar for 40 days to await the loading of Pruner's return cargo. For his part, Lamprecht contracted with the firm to wait only 8 days in San Lúcar while Pruner's factor decided whether or not his ship would be needed for the return voyage.⁶⁰

Due to a court action against him for selling inferior goods, we know that in 1530 Pruner contracted the ship named *La Trinidad*, owned by Juan de Bedye of Biscaya, to ship a large quantity of Mallaquetta pepper, originating on the West Coast of Africa, from the port of San Lúcar to Antwerp.⁶¹ The goods were sold to Pruner's agent in San Lúcar by a Portuguese merchant.

Lazarus Tucher, the merchant of Nuremberg and resident of Antwerp, contracted with Jan Woutersse, a shipmaster of Antwerp,

⁵⁹ The contract is transcribed in Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 18–21.

⁶⁰ Both contracts are transcribed in Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 21–28.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 61–62.

for his services and for his ship named *Joris de Groot* to go to Bordeaux and under the direction of Karl Strelen, Tucher's German factor, load the ship with pastel dyes and return to Antwerp. Woutersseone agreed that no other goods or wares would be loaded onto his ship except as directed by Strelen.⁶² Some months later, once the ship had arrived in Antwerp, Lazarus Tucher renegotiated the shipping contract with Jan Woutersseone for his ship the *Joris de Groot* and again under the direction of his factor, Karel Strelen, shipped to England 1044 bales of pastel dyes he had obtained in Bordeaux.⁶³

German merchants tended to rely on the ships of others sending only a factor along on the voyage. These ventures were, for the most part, restricted to the eastern Atlantic ports in Spain, Portugal, and sometimes France. Voyages across the Atlantic would have been rare for German merchants not to mention voyages into the Indian Ocean. Even without the kind of organized voyages that the Spanish and Portuguese merchant marine was able to mount, some Germans formed overseas trading companies to travel to the New World.⁶⁴

While non-Hanseatic Germans participated on a small scale in the seaborne carrying trade during the sixteenth century through contracting with Zeeland or even Spanish shipmasters, due to the absence of their own merchant marine they were never an important threat to Iberian hegemony or to the emerging Dutch and English shipping industries. The Hanse was fairly entrenched in the trade with the Baltic and in any event was not particularly inclined to strike out into the Atlantic as English and Dutch shipping began to actively compete for their Baltic business. Non-Hanseatic, and particularly southern, Germans had to be content with the role of distributors to central Europe for the goods entering Antwerp from far-flung marketplaces.

In this regard, then, Antwerp became the gateway for Germans wanting to participate in the Atlantic world economy. The availability of seaborne transport in Antwerp complemented German overland trade networks and minimized the necessity of Germans entering the maritime transport business themselves. South German merchants constituted a very important component in the Atlantic world economy by virtue of their role in the overall trading networks of the sixteenth century.

⁶² SAA, Certificatieboek 6, 17 June 1545, f° 117.

⁶³ SAA, Certificatieboek 6, 2 February 1546, f° 172.

⁶⁴ See *supra*, p. 80.

Antwerp served as the transfer point for goods coming to the continent and for those from the interior to be sent overseas. Although a fair amount of the local products of the region around Antwerp were traded in the city, these probably amounted to only about one third of Antwerp's commerce. Antwerp was predominantly a gateway center for the overland distribution of goods from abroad, and this business was firmly in the hands of German merchants. Some estimates suggest that shipments from Antwerp to Germany account for over half of all the trade leaving Antwerp overland and almost one fifth of all the trade leaving the city by sea.⁶⁵

Goods being sent from Antwerp to Germany by sea were usually sent first to Amsterdam before being redirected to North German and Baltic ports, but they may also have been sent from Antwerp to the still growing port of Hamburg. Indeed, Antwerp's sixteenth-century ties with Hamburg may have been one of the reasons for Hamburg's success as the German port for the Atlantic trade following the fall of Antwerp toward the end of the sixteenth century when large numbers of Flemish merchants fled the Low Countries during the Dutch Revolt.

But in the end, it was the overland trade that more clearly set up Antwerp as the geographical gateway with Germany. Two thirds of all the goods sent from Antwerp to Germany came first into the city by sea whether on ships contracted by German merchants as outlined above or purchased in Antwerp's markets from Flemish or foreign merchants. After ships were unloaded, goods usually received some type of handling in Antwerp before being transported to German cities. English cloth was often cut or otherwise finished, spices were re-packed, sugar and salt refined and so on. The system for overland transport to Germany was regular, fairly predictable, and above all was a key component linking continental Europe with the wider Atlantic world economy.

⁶⁵ W. Brulez, *De Firma della Faille*, 463–465.

CHAPTER SIX

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF ANTWERP'S GERMAN TRADE

On 7 July 1491 a wagon train of thirty cartloads of copper slowly made its way past the gates and into the city of Antwerp.¹ The copper belonged to the Nuremberg merchant Willem Moer, whose business revolved around importing copper into Antwerp and exporting textiles to German cities. Thirty carts ambling through the city likely added to normal traffic increasing congestion. There would also have been a need to store the copper until it was sold and to take care of both the horses and drivers. By the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp's place as an international market became even more pronounced once the Portuguese began importing their spices. Antwerp's commercial infrastructure must have come under considerable strain. It is little wonder that German merchants and transporters along with Italians and Antwerpeners, all depending on overland trade, petitioned the city in 1562 for a freight terminal.²

This roughly seventy-year period witnessed a discernable shift in commercial technique. The older market forms such as the medieval fair cycle were replaced by the realization of the year-round trading city where locations such as storehouses, merchant houses and showrooms, common places for merchants to ply their trade, were joined by newer institutions such as the new Antwerp Bourse. Added to this mix was the *Hessenhuis*, the freight terminal that would become particularly important for the German merchants engaged in overland trade as the sixteenth century wore on. The latter half of the sixteenth century was also the period in which financial transactions seem to have overtaken the trade in goods as the mainstay of the Antwerp economy and as the principal activity of the foreign merchants, and the Germans in particular.

Antwerp must have been a vibrant place; a bustling port town with a wharf that was surely choked with goods from all over the globe.

¹ Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. 2, 73.

² SAA, Privilegiekamer 2208, *Hessenhuis*, n.d. [about 1562], f° 1.

The city's streets teemed with packers and porters and carters. By the sixteenth century Antwerp was a central place for its hinterland, a gateway city to the continent, and an important node on a vast commercial network extending throughout the Holy Roman Empire and beyond.

While this chapter will highlight to some extent the changes that took place over time, the focus here will be the infrastructure of Antwerp's trade during the dynamic middle of the sixteenth century. Of particular interest in all of this is how commerce was organized, and what process merchants used to send goods to their ultimate destinations.

Antwerp's Commercial Infrastructure

Since the early fourteenth century, the annual cycle of Antwerp's and Bergen op Zoom's fairs had been attracting merchants to the area. During their earliest years, the fairs were important for regional trade. By the late fifteenth century, however, these fairs made Antwerp the hub of trade in the Low Countries, eventually surpassing Bruges in international importance. Gradually, Antwerp moved toward the establishment of a permanent market not bound by the fair cycle. By the turn of the sixteenth century the fairs ceased to have much practical meaning from a trading standpoint as most goods were routinely and freely traded throughout the year. This came about because the Dukes of Brabant for years had been extending the official dates of the fairs.³

The fair cycle continued, however, to be used as a means to reckon payment and set interest schedules; fairs became the pro forma indicator of the time accounts would come due. According to an imperial regulation of 1541, credit obligations for goods purchased (or exchanges made) during the *Bamismarkt* were to be satisfied by 10 November; at the *Coudemarkt* by 10 February, at the *Paaschmarkt* by 10 May, and at the *Pinkstermarkt* by 10 August.⁴

While the fair cycle set out the periods during which goods could be exchanged, the *panden*, or various specialty markets, were the

³ Florence Edler, 'The Van der Molen, Commission Merchants of Antwerp'; see also Oscar de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen*, 451.

⁴ C. Slootmans, *De Bergen op Zoomsche Jaarmarkten*, 34.

actual locations where merchants bought and sold goods for both local consumption and for export. Although the *panden* initially followed the fair cycle, by the sixteenth century many simply remained open year round.⁵ These specialty markets were organized based on the type of goods that might be found in them. The art market, including not only paintings and sculptures, but also manuscripts was the *Onze-Lieve-Vrouwepand* (Our Lady's Market) founded in the second half of the fifteenth century and located on Antwerp's *Groenplein*.⁶ A variety of other *Panden*, such as the Tapestry *Pand*, the Jewelers' *Pand*, and the Silversmiths' *Pand* became important toward the middle of the sixteenth century as places where merchants and artisans bought and sold these luxury wares.

Once Antwerp had become a year-round market place, the sale of goods came to be transacted in the *panden*, and also the inns, taverns, and even warehouses of the city. It was the more specialized market-places, such as the various *panden*, that became the gathering places for merchants looking to make deals and purchase merchandise. A *pand* was usually housed within a courtyard with covered galleries surrounding an open space (at least this was the case for the more permanent of the *panden*). Merchants and artisans selling goods at the *pand* had stalls in which to display their wares.

The *Engelse Pand* (English Market) was perhaps the most important of the sixteenth-century *panden*. The location of the *Engelse Pand* changed over time as the English merchant community grew. But by the mid-sixteenth century, the English had been granted new quarters in the famous *Hof van Lier* with a warehouse nearby on the *Venusstraat*.⁷ The *Engelse Pand* was located within this English establishment in Antwerp, and it was there that the English sold all the woolen cloth they imported.⁸ The English market, like all the other *panden*, had regulations. The English merchants instituted the rules of Antwerp's English market early in the sixteenth-century, once Antwerp had become their primary seat of business. English merchants were per-

⁵ Jan Materné, 'Schoon ende Bequaem tot versamelinghe der cooplieden: Antwerpens beurswereld tijdens de gouden zestiende eeuw,' in *Ter Beurze: Geschiedenis van de aandelenhandel in België, 1300–1990*, edited by Geert de Clercq, (Bruges: Uitgeverij Marc Van de Wiele, 1992), 52.

⁶ Dan Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp, 1460–1560: Our Lady's Pand,' *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990): 558.

⁷ Oscar de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen*, 155–57.

⁸ *Ibid.*

mitted to show their goods for sale at the English market only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, but they could make bargains on other days including sales of goods "sight unseen." In any case English merchants were not allowed to make any deals with other merchants before the cloth-fleet actually arrived in Antwerp from England.⁹

By the end of the fifteenth century Antwerp merchants, like those in Bruges almost 100 years earlier, had come to feel the need for a central exchange to settle the credit transactions, and otherwise conduct the complex business necessitated by the long-distance nature of the city's trade. The first permanent Bourse in Antwerp was established toward the end of the fifteenth century, and by the first decade of the sixteenth century was already too small. Despite remodeling the Bourse in 1515, the city had no choice but to build a new Bourse due to the shortage of space for all the merchants who were coming to the city to trade. Space was found just off the new thoroughfare called the *Meir*. The city built a large structure in 1532 based on the plan of the old Bourse. The new Bourse consisted of a large courtyard surrounded by covered galleries. In rooms above the galleries various merchant-bankers and brokers could conduct their business.¹⁰

Many notaries owned houses near the Bourse, including Seger's-Hertoghen (and later his son who had the same name). The Hertoghens had a significant German clientele during their long careers between 1535 and 1561. Hertoghen did so much business with the German merchants that his records form the bulk of the notarial records concerning German merchant activities.

The new Bourse was primarily a financial exchange, and although deals could be transacted in the Bourse it never took the place of the *panden* as far as display and sales of goods were concerned. Probably the greatest role the Bourse played in trade was as the place where merchants settled transactions, and made payments or obtained credit. The Bourse was also the place where merchants traded negotiable instruments—bonds, bills of exchange, long-term promissory notes, etc.¹¹

⁹ John Wheeler, *A Treatise of Commerce (1601)*, edited by George Burton Hotchkiss, (New York: New York University Press, 1931), 32.

¹⁰ For more on the development of the Antwerp Bourse see Donald J. Harreld, 'Trading Places: Public and Private Places of Merchants in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp,' *Journal of Urban History* 29 (2003): 657–669.

¹¹ Herman van der Wee, and Jan Materné, 'Antwerp as a World Market in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' 30.

Despite its position as the site of financial transactions, the Bourse had some limited utility as a place for the display of specialty merchandise. Antwerp artists rented stalls on the top floor of the Bourse to display their high-priced pieces for sale. A fire, reportedly started in an artist's stall, destroyed the Bourse in 1583.

With financial transactions and payment settlement as the basic function of the Antwerp Bourse and the effective elimination of any strict adherence to the fair cycle by the middle of the sixteenth century, mercantile activities were conducted throughout the city wherever merchants congregated or wherever their merchandise might be located. The merchants' houses and storehouses, and the inns and taverns of the city were particularly important in this regard. These places, both public and private, were where most merchants bought and sold goods. The inns also had the distinction of being locations for contracting freight transport out of the city, and this more than exchange may have been the most important commercial use of the city's inns and taverns.¹²

The warehouses of individual merchants worked in tandem with the stalls of the *panden* as the preferred showplaces for merchandise. With the notable exception of the well-known cloth market of the English merchants who were bound by their own regulations concerning display, many merchants often simply used their houses as showrooms. While these houses served primarily as offices and residences for the merchants, they often also included storage space for commercial goods. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the houses also served as places where merchants not only showed their goods but where they negotiated commercial transactions. For example, an Antwerp silversmith and two merchants (one of whom was from Hamburg) made two separate agreements to purchase ash late in the year 1533. They made one of these agreements in a house called *Oosterreich* on the *Brabantse Korenmarkt*, and the other in a house called the *Groot Mortier* on the *Grote Markt*.¹³ Likewise, in 1544 Christoffel Hochstetter inspected dyestuffs in the cellar of the house of Jan Balbani which was coincidentally on the *Hochtstetterstraat*.¹⁴ Private houses were also places where financial transactions could be negotiated, although the Bourse remained the principal place for this type of activity.

¹² Donald J. Harreld, 'Trading Places,' 661.

¹³ Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 92.

¹⁴ Ibid., 170.

Inns and taverns also could serve as meeting places for German merchants, particularly those who were in the city for only a short time. In a sense the inn was an extension of the merchant house because for most foreign merchants with business in Antwerp it served as a base of operations; at once a home, an office, and often a show-place. The *Rooden Leeuw*, an inn on the *Cammerstraat*, was a popular gathering place for Germans, and dealings of all sorts took place there.¹⁵ The *Rooden Leeuw* was probably a home away from home for German merchants because Germans had some involvement in its operation. Cornelis Heynts and his wife Barbara Wickstetter, of the Frankfurt merchant family, were the proprietors. Barbara's sister Anna Wickstetter, wife of the Leipzig merchant Heinrich Preusser (a German merchant of considerable means who was operating out of Antwerp), appears to have owned the property as Heynts and his wife owed mortgage payments of 100 *Carolusgulden* per year to the Preussers.¹⁶ The inn, named the *Zwaan* on the *Coeperstraat*, was also a site where both Germans and English merchants transacted their business.¹⁷

The Organization of Overland Transport

Places to facilitate financial and commercial exchange were not the only institutions to develop in sixteenth-century Antwerp. The infrastructure that developed to handle overland transport was oriented more toward international trade than local trade. As the city's international trade grew, the large population of foreign merchants needed to have their goods shipped to the cities of central, eastern, and southern Europe. Large amounts of merchandise had to be shipped in and out of the city on a daily basis, and the city had many workers involved in the transportation industry, from packers and porters, to transporters and teamsters. Depending on the season, laborers loaded goods for as many as thirty merchants per day on wagons

¹⁵ Heinrich Rantzau a nobleman from northern Germany who invested heavily in Antwerp's financial markets is known to have stayed there in 1545 (Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 187). Various transport contracts were drawn up at this inn (Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 97).

¹⁶ Anna Wickstetter and her husband, Heinrich Preusser, gave Balthazar Putteneer of Brussels authority to collect the past due amount of the mortgage. SAA, Notariaat N-2076, 27 March 1556, f° 66–67.

¹⁷ Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 112.

just for the journey to German cities. This may seem like a small number, but one needs to consider that each merchant might fill several wagons. Perhaps ninety wagons pulled by a total of 450 horses might have rolled out the city each day, and these were just the ones going to German cities. A remarkable coordinated effort was put into arranging the purchase and shipment of goods to Germany; it was a process that involved various merchants, agents, brokers, preparers and packers, and ultimately transporters. One can only imagine the hustle and bustle that must have been so much a part of Antwerp's urban landscape.

By the turn of the sixteenth century, not only were most of the goods going from Antwerp to Germany shipped overland, but more and more European long-distance trade shifted from seaborne to land-based trade routes. The Italians had been sending their goods by sea from at least the end of the thirteenth century until the middle of the fifteenth century when they began to take advantage once again of overland routes to the north. Even at its height during the fourteenth century seaborne commerce never completely replaced overland trade. Europe's long coastline certainly made seaborne trade advantageous for many regions, but obviously large areas of Europe had no access to the sea. Sometime toward the second half of the fifteenth century merchants began increasingly to direct their efforts away from the sea lanes and toward the routes crossing west-central Europe.

South Germans had long taken advantage of both overland and water transport, but tolls along the waterways led to an increasing preference for overland transport to and from Cologne and more importantly Frankfurt with its free fair, and also to points farther south.¹⁸ The Scheldt, the Rhine, and the Main Rivers had provided efficient routes for transport during the fifteenth century, but the steady proliferation of tolls made their use cost prohibitive by the sixteenth century.¹⁹

As a result of this dependence on overland transport, merchants made use of a host of specialized workers; porters, packers, wheelbarrow men, crane operators, and workers to load and discharge goods from wagons and to move them about the city. Not surprisingly Antwerp had several guilds organized around the warehousing and packing

¹⁸ Floris Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen*, vol. 7, 153.

¹⁹ Albert Haecck, *De Kerbinders van het Hessenhuis en de Hessenatie: Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis van een Antwerpse Natie*, (Antwerp: de Vlijt, 1960), 24–25.

trades. What is particularly striking is that the freight transporters and teamsters themselves were, by and large, Germans. Indeed, most were from Hesse or the surrounding area, in particular the town of Frammersbach.

Some historians have mistakenly identified either the German merchant community and/or the Hessian freight transporters with Antwerp's *Hessenatie*.²⁰ The Antwerp *Hessenatie* refers to the guild of those workers who loaded and unloaded the great *Hessenwagens*;²¹ the guild, whose official name was the *Natie van het Laden ende Onladen van Hessenwageningen*,²² was named after the wagons its members most often loaded and unloaded rather than the county in Germany. Indeed, most of the large freight wagons peculiar to the German area around Hesse were referred to as *Hessenwagens* in Antwerp whether they were actually built in Hesse or not. The importance of these German wagons for the Antwerp market should not be underestimated. These wagons had the advantage of being able to carry a heavier load than the common wagons of Low Countries manufacture due to their wide gauge and proportionally shorter wheelbase.²³ While the bulk of the goods would have had an effect on the weight that these wagons could carry, in one example a mix of merchandise typical of the trade between Antwerp and Germany (woolen cloths, says, pepper and ginger) weighing roughly ten tons was spread over six wagons.²⁴ Cargoes with weights of over two tons would have been quite common.²⁵ In addition to the famed *Hessenwagens*, merchants also often shipped freight to Germany, or at least to Cologne, by *Keulse kerre*, the single axle cart of Cologne.²⁶

The mechanism through which German merchants and German freight transporters came together to transact their business is not entirely understood for the first half of the sixteenth century, but

²⁰ See for example V. Vasquez de Prada, *Lettres marchandes d'Anvers*, 153.

²¹ The fact that the Flemish word *natie* can mean both "nation" and "guild" likely adds to the confusion.

²² SAA, Privilegiekamer, 1015.

²³ Albert Haeck, *De Kerbinders van het Hessenhuis en de Hessenatie*, 27.

²⁴ Based on average weights of goods listed in SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 16 February 1542, f° 96. Typical English broadcloths of 2 yards by 24 yards weighed between 68 and 90 pounds, a pack of pepper weighed 696 pounds, etc.

²⁵ S.J. Fockema Andreae, 'Hessenwegen,' *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde*, vol. 20, no. 11, (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1957), 289.

²⁶ Floris Prims, *Geschiedenis van Antwerpen*, vol. 7, 152.

drawing on the literature for other areas of the Low Countries and what remains in the Antwerp sources, it seems that Antwerp was probably not much different from other commercial cities.²⁷ The evidence for Bruges, for instance, suggests that innkeepers often acted as brokers between merchants and most probably between merchants and freight transporters. Indeed, as Anke Greve has pointed out, brokers may very well have been employees of the innkeepers in Bruges.²⁸

In the early fourteenth century Count Guy of Flanders granted the first privilege listed in the Antwerp *Makelaars* (brokers') guild records. The document indicates that foreigners could not enter into any business deal without the services of a broker.²⁹ What is more, brokers could not engage in trade for themselves without securing the services of another broker. Although Antwerp is not specifically mentioned in this privilege, the Count likely intended to include all brokers' guilds within his sphere of influence in this privilege. Similarly, many of Antwerp's guilds received privileges that were based on earlier privileges first obtained by guilds in Bruges. Each subsequent ruler through Mary of Burgundy reconfirmed the basic privileges set down by Count Guy.

Since Antwerp's *Makelaars* guild had the same basic privileges as those of Bruges, it is likely that the techniques employed would have also been much the same. Antwerp's innkeepers and brokers may have had the same relationship that they enjoyed in Bruges. If not, innkeepers at least procured the services of a broker for those staying in their inns.³⁰ A warder in the inn *den Guld Ancker* had some hand in bringing together a merchant of Bruges, who was presumably staying at his inn, and a Hansard who was staying in the "inn of the *ois-*

²⁷ For a general study see the chapter on the inn as a trading center in: Hans Conrad Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft zum Gasthaus: Studien zur Gastlichkeit im Mittelalter*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Schriften, Band 31, (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1987), 223–230.

²⁸ Anke Greve, 'Brokerage and Trade in Medieval Bruges: Regulation and Reality,' in *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries): Merchants, Organization, Infrastructure*, edited by Peter Stabel, et al. (Leuven: Garant, 2000), 41–42.

²⁹ SAA, GA 4508 bis. *Privilegieboek van de Makelaars*, "nul estrange no bourgeois de notre dicte ville ne peut achapter no vendra aucune marchandise, no ausi marchander la quel qu'il fuit dedans notre dicte ville et eschevinnaige sans avoir auecques eulx ung franc courretier . . ."

³⁰ While Anke Greve finds evidence of brokers working as employees of the innkeepers in Bruges, I have not found the same evidence in Antwerp. It is very possible, however, that the innkeeper routinely introduced his tenants to certain brokers, one would expect in exchange for some remuneration.

terlingen (Hansards) within the city called *den Moriaen*” where they conducted a business deal with a certain Adrian Panisse acting as the broker.³¹ While only citizens of the city ordinarily could be brokers, the brokers guild often admitted foreigners as long as they paid the appropriate, and much higher, brokerage guild dues of 50 £ *parisis* as opposed to 10 £ *parisis* for citizens. The Englishman, William Marrin, was a sworn broker (*gesworen makeleer*) in Antwerp. He acted as the broker between an English cloth merchant and a local merchant at the Bergen op Zoom fair for the sale of some English cloth.³²

Brokers worked as intermediaries between merchants in Antwerp as well as in Bruges. In addition to a variety of financial transactions involving brokers, the Antwerp sources mention that in 1549 the Jenisch firm of Augsburg purchased a quantity of cloth from the factor of the English merchant Thomas Gresham through the broker Ghysbrecht Goetberck of Wesel, then living in Antwerp.³³ Antwerp brokers were also active at German fairs. Early in 1556, a broker from Antwerp was involved in the sale of several barrels of sugar at the Frankfurt fair between the factor of Joris Herwart of Augsburg and Werner Vrydach of Bergen op Zoom.³⁴

Despite the interaction between brokers and merchants, and merchants and transporters, it is not entirely clear in what capacity the brokers of Antwerp involved themselves in the business of securing transport for goods. There is nothing in the guild records which speaks directly to the issue of transport. Neither is there any indication what the brokers' role might have been in bringing merchants and freight transporters together in the case of Antwerp. Nevertheless inns and taverns played a significant role in housing foreign merchants while they were in Antwerp and as a place where they conducted their commercial affairs. Whatever the relationship between brokers and innkeepers in Antwerp, the inn/tavern was a common meeting ground for both merchants and freight transporters as the example of the inn named the *Rooden Leeuw*, mentioned earlier, indicates.

The inns and taverns of the city acted as an extension of the marketplace, catering to merchants, the factors and servants of the large merchant firms, along with brokers and people involved in

³¹ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 7 November 1542, f° 17v.

³² SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 10 June 1542, f° 131v.

³³ SAA, Certificatieboek 7, 19 August 1551, f° 193.

³⁴ SAA, Certificatieboek 12, 13 February 1556, f° 226.

the transport business.³⁵ Here, merchants and transporters could make transport arrangements and draw-up contracts. For example, Hans Spinghele of Nuremberg and Claes Stengher of Frammersbach drew up a transport contract in the *Rooden Leeuw*. Spinghele purchased half of Stengher's shipping concern of fourteen horses and two wagons for 20 *Carolusgulden* in order to transport merchandise in the Low Countries or elsewhere for their mutual profit.³⁶ This type of arrangement was probably not widespread, but it does illustrate that inns were important places for the procurement of freight transporters. More importantly, and not completely inappropriate to a discussion of the role of inns and taverns as a place for freight-hauling transactions, this contract suggests quite clearly that the freight transporter had become much more than a mere teamster by the mid-sixteenth century. The contract between Spinghele and Stengher states that Stengher's wagons were en route to Cologne at the time he was sitting in the *Rooden Leeuw* inn having the contract drawn up.³⁷

Germans more than others would have felt quite at home in Antwerp's inns and taverns. Of the Germans who obtained citizenship during the thirty-year period between 1533 and 1563, three listed their occupation as innkeeper, twelve listed their occupation as taverniers, and an additional fifteen were tappers (publicans), two of whom were from the town of Frammersbach, a German town which produced an inordinate number of freight transporters.³⁸ Most of these German innkeepers and taverniers were from northwest German towns, but one was from Augsburg, an important destination for Antwerp exports and potentially an important connection for an innkeeper.

What emerges from the evidence is the picture of a city in which the great freight wagons entered the gates laden with the metals, fustians, and other goods of Germany.³⁹ After unloading these wagons at the appropriate warehouse, the transporter would head for an inn to refresh himself, his teamsters, and his teams, perhaps pur-

³⁵ Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft zum Gasthaus*, 1987, 223.

³⁶ Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 97–99.

³⁷ Ibid. "... 14 peerden metten 2 waghnen allen hueren gerecke ende gereetschape totten selven wagenen toebehoirende nyets vuyt gescheijden *nu ter tyt op reyse naer Coellen*..." (emphasis added).

³⁸ SAA, Poortersboeken, 1533–1563.

³⁹ While it is true that large amounts of metals were also shipped by water routes, overland shipment of metals continued to form a part of the transport strategies of south German merchants.

chasing a replacement horse or two at Antwerp's horse market before contracting for a return trip.

After the middle of the 1560s, with the construction of the *Hessenhuis*, the techniques involved in procuring freight transport shifted away from the inns and taverns of the city. At the request of several South German and Italian merchants and transporters (including the Jenisch, Welser, and Fugger firms), as well as some native Antwerpeners, the city agreed to build a terminal of sorts for the overland trade with Germany and parts south.⁴⁰ It is quite likely that the great numbers of wagons coming into the city caused such congestion for the city's roadways that a solution in the form of a common terminal became necessary by 1560. The *Hessenhuis* (which still stands) was located in the vicinity of the *Paardenmarkt* (horse market) just inside the city wall. For a fee merchants could load outgoing wagons and unload incoming wagons in the *Hessenhuis*, and presumably arrange for transport on the spot. This was a considerable improvement over the days when goods leaving the city were packed and loaded along the streets where the warehouses of the merchants were located.

In any event, whether contracted at inns or at the *Hessenhuis*, a great collaborative effort went into organizing transport into wagon trains bound for German cities. Several freight transporters could spread the load of the various goods of a number of merchants across their wagons and deliver the goods to multiple destinations. Dividing up loads between several wagons had the added benefit of insuring against possible losses due to risks such as robbery. In August 1542, thirteen German merchants, including such notables as Jacob Welser, Jakob Rehlinger, the heirs of Lucas Rem, Marcus Ulstadt, Bartolomeo Jenisch, Michael Schwicker, and Joris Schorer, had their goods loaded on the wagons of six freight transporters, Hans Meyer, Lucas Seitz, Fritz Seitz, Coens Frans, Hans Hof, and Marck van der Loen. All these goods, predominantly either English woolen cloths or kerseys along with some packs of spices and a few barrels of sugar, were going to either Nuremberg, or Augsburg, with some merchants requiring stops in both cities.⁴¹

Although Nuremberg and Augsburg received Antwerp's highest value exports in greater quantities than most other cities, urban centers all over Germany were tied into Antwerp's commercial network.

⁴⁰ SAA, Privilegiekamer 2208, *Hessenhuis*.

⁴¹ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 19 August 1542, f° 149v–151v.

For example, the city of Trier was not a particularly important destination for goods being sent out of Antwerp, but merchants from Trier still came to the Antwerp market. Freight transporters from Bachendorp (a town near Trier) usually handled transport back and forth to Antwerp for the merchants of Trier.⁴²

The freight transporters from the town of Frammersbach controlled most of the carrying activities along the well traveled route between Antwerp and Nuremberg or Augsburg, but they were not the only freight transporters active in overland transport between Antwerp and German cities. Of the forty-four freight transporters who brought a request before the Antwerp city Magistrate in July 1562 complaining about the condition of the road through the Kempen, nine were from Aachen, eight were from Weert, ten were from Frammersbach, nine were from various places in Hesse, five were from either Liège or Limburg, and the origin of three was not specified.⁴³

* * *

Clearly purchasing and shipping goods to distant German cities required a fair degree of planning, both in Antwerp before the voyage and on the road. The changing nature of the techniques used in business dealings during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries demanded efficient systems for several reasons. First, since the fair no longer had much meaning as far as trade was concerned by the sixteenth century, and as business was transacted year round, merchants needed new mechanisms for the display and exchange of wares. The *panden* and a variety of other places served this purpose, and the fairs tended more and more to become the time for account reconciliation. Despite these new institutions, the long-distance nature of Antwerp's trade often made it impossible for buyers to inspect merchandise before the sale, forcing the merchant to rely on the expertise of a factor or agent. A system of accountability became very important.

Second, merchants traveled more and more infrequently with their goods, so reputable freight handlers, transporters, and occasionally even savvy ship's captains were in great demand. Workers charged with preparing and packing goods for the long voyage over land, and with loading and unloading wagons found ready employment

⁴² SAA, Certificatieboek 7, 17 December 1552, f° 272v; Jan. 14, 1553, f° 280.

⁴³ Albert Haec, *De Kerbinders van het Hessenhuis en de Hessenatie*, 30.

in Antwerp. Likewise, Antwerp's wharves were places teaming with activity requiring the labor of crane operators, porters, and carters to move the merchandise around the city. Merchants sought out professional transporters who needed to know trade routes well and be prepared for the hazards that might be encountered along the way.

Finally, the place of Antwerp as a gateway to the German trade network on one hand and as the European terminus for the emerging world-wide trade on the other hand, drew merchants from all over Europe into contact with each other. In Antwerp this commercial contact took place not only in formal trading places such as the Bourse, but also in informal places such as inns, taverns, and merchant houses and warehouses.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TRADE BETWEEN ANTWERP AND GERMANY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Just as there were some significant differences between the position of South German merchants and North German merchants dominated by the Hanseatic League in Antwerp, there was a clear distinction between Antwerp's trade with southern Germany focused on Nuremberg and its trade with northwestern Germany centered roughly on Cologne. This distinction between north and south reinforces the idea that Antwerp's trade with Germany was multi-faceted and multi-lateral. The Antwerp-German trade was never really characterized by a simple 'bilateral' trading relationship based on the exchange of a particular set of goods. Merchants created myriad commercial connections important to their own success without thought to larger issues like overall balance of trade, or how their activities fitted in to larger urban networks.

The character of the Antwerp-German trade during the sixteenth century showed discernable differences between north and south. Shipments to southern German destinations had a much greater value, on average, than did shipments to North German destinations. Table 1 shows the average value per shipment from Antwerp to selected northern and southern German destinations around the middle of the sixteenth century using the Hundredth Penny Tax records as a guide. These numbers show that the North German export trade depended much more on small-scale merchants than the southern German trade did. Often more products were included in each shipment to the north than there were included in each shipment to the south, from a high of 3.34 for Aachen to a low of 1.36 for Augsburg.

It was not until early in the sixteenth century that events in both Antwerp and in other parts of Europe allowed the trade with southern Germany to become so important, but it was also not the case that the entire tenor of the Antwerp-German trade changed completely with the rise of the trade with the cities of southern Germany. Both South German and North German merchants exchanged metals in large quantities for English cloths and Portuguese spices, but in other respects the types of goods important to the northern German

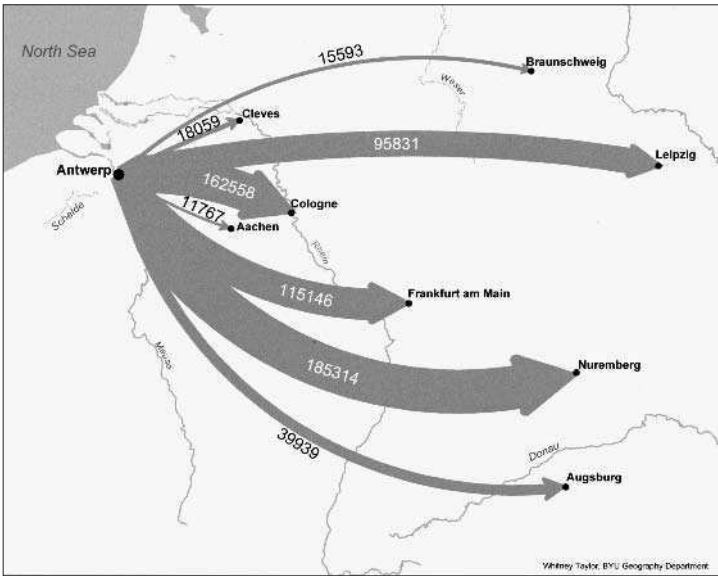
Table 1. Number of Shipments vs. Value of Shipments from Antwerp to Germany (1543-1545)

(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357-23364)

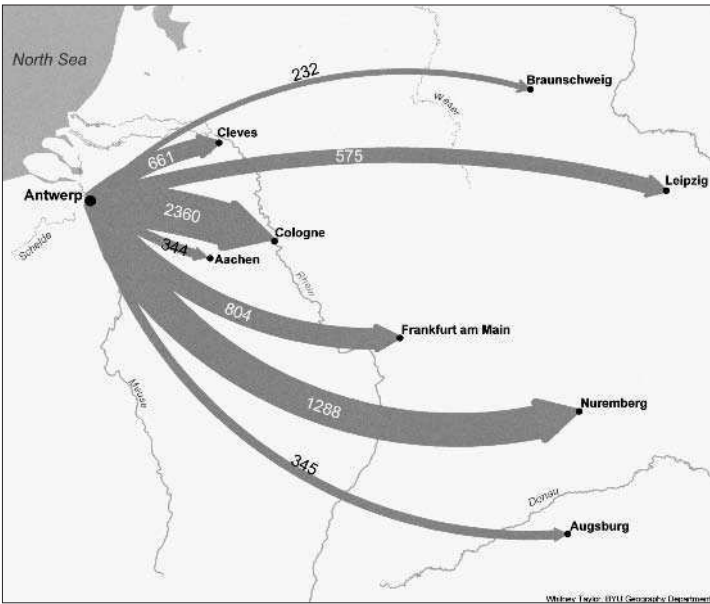
Destination	Number of Shipments	Average Number of Products per Shipment	Total Value Flemish Pounds Gr.	Average Value per Shipment
Nuremberg	1288	1.47	190,000	147.51
Frankfurt	804	1.56	115,000	143.03
Leipzig	575	1.54	95,800	166.60
Augsburg	346	1.36	39,800	115.00
Cologne	2360	1.60	165,000	69.91
Cleves	661	1.61	18,449	27.91
Aachen	344	3.34	11,800	34.30
Münster	235	1.46	9,860	41.95

cities often diverged from those important for southern cities. Considerable trade in traditional goods, such as various cloths and foodstuffs, linked Antwerp and the northwestern German areas centered on Cologne, Cleves, and Aachen, from the period before events thrust Antwerp onto the stage as a world trade center. Likewise, the value and volumes of the products merchants chose to send to northern towns was very different from those they sent to southern towns. Maps 3 and 4 which show the character of Antwerp's trade with Germany can be viewed from the perspective of the total value of goods, or by highlighting the number of shipments.

Although Cologne dominated the German trade with Antwerp during the fifteenth century, it did not necessarily lose ground in the sixteenth century as far as traffic volume was concerned. Cologne continued to be the most important point on the principal trade routes with southern and eastern Germany throughout the sixteenth century, but Cologne's prosperity as the focal point of German trade had already peaked. While it is true that during the sixteenth century Cologne merchants continued to trade in Antwerp in greater numbers than those from virtually any other German city, with the increasingly international nature of the Antwerp market the great merchant firms from southern Germany began to engage in commercial activities in Antwerp on an unprecedented scale. If in the fifteenth century Cologne merchants were in control of Antwerp's trade with Germany, by the sixteenth century they could only look on as the great South German firms of Augsburg and Nuremberg conducted the lion's share of the export trade even to Cologne itself.



Map 3. Total Value of Antwerp's Exports to German Cities (1543–1545)



Map 4. Number of Shipments from Antwerp to German Cities (1543–1545)

Imports from South Germany

One of the difficulties in determining the balance of trade in sixteenth-century Europe is the paucity of data available to the researcher. While, as will be seen, data do exist sufficient to allow some discussion of the trade between Antwerp and the German destinations, the same can not always be said for the goods the Germans brought into the city. It is possible to outline the kinds of goods Germans sent to Antwerp, but figuring the value and volume of these goods is a difficult task. What can be discussed is the extent of South German participation in the German export trade to Antwerp.

In the sixteenth century some of the most important goods from Germany (metals and textiles) came to Antwerp from South German merchants even when they were not products of southern German origin. Nevertheless, southern and eastern German metals and metal manufactured products were vitally important to the Antwerp market. Antwerp was the most important copper market in Europe during parts of the sixteenth century thanks to German merchants from both the north (the area around Aachen) and south (primarily Augsburg and Nuremberg).¹ German merchants imported tens of thousands of hundredweight of copper into Antwerp. The Fuggers were paying close attention to the Antwerp copper market at least as early as the 1490s as they began to move more and more toward copper mining,² but most of their business in the city would not come until the first years of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, from 1495–1504, at a time when most of the Fugger copper was still going to Venice, the Fugger firm sent 23,960 hundredweight (*Zentner*) of copper from Danzig via the Baltic and North Sea route to Antwerp and Amsterdam.³ Between 1507–1510 of the 56,208 hundredweight of copper the Fuggers sent out of their mines (mostly in Tirol), 32,078 hundredweight went to Antwerp, and between 1516–1519 as much as 49,823 hundredweight was sent to Antwerp out of a total of 75,920 hundredweight.⁴

¹ Hermann Kellenbenz, 'Europäisches Kupfer, ende 15. bis mitte 17. Jahrhundert: Ergebnisse eines Kolloquiums,' in *Schwerpunkte der Kupferproduktion und des Kupferhandels in Europa, 1500–1650*, edited by Hermann Kellenbenz, (Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1977), 335.

² Götz Freiherr von Pölnitz, *Jakob Fugger: Kaiser, Kirche und Kapital in der oberdeutschen Renaissance*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1949), 44.

³ Max Jansen, *Jakob Fugger der Reiche: Studien und Quellen*, Studien zur Fugger-Geschichte, vol. 3, (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1910), 156.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 156–158.

Others, particularly Nuremberg merchants, were also early participants in Antwerp's trade in German metals. Everaert Stiermeyere and Hans Herweck both of Nuremberg sent 15 bales of copper to Antwerp on 3 July 1490, and Willem Moer of Nuremberg imported no less than thirty cartloads of copper into Antwerp in July 1491 by an overland route.⁵

The great firms, like the Fuggers' company, were the most heavily involved in the metals trade, but many individual merchants sending shipments of various sizes also imported metal into Antwerp. For instance, in 1542 several merchants of Nuremberg, Leipzig, and Breslau (through their Antwerp agents Hartman Schmaltz, Heinrick Preusser, Wolf Puschinger, Bartholomeo Jenisch, Gielis Musch, and Niclaus Reynemen) imported 66,000 Antwerp pounds (31,020 kilograms; the Antwerp pound was roughly equivalent to 470 grams) of tin and 17,600 Antwerp pounds (8272 kilograms) of copper from Leipzig via Hamburg.⁶ Because of its importance for the India trade, much of the copper Germans imported into Antwerp was sold to Iberian merchants. For instance, Hartman Schmaltz (Smals) delivered 223 plates of beaten copper weighing 7,224 Antwerp pounds (about 3395 kilograms) to the Spanish merchant Jaime de Bilbao.⁷ But copper from the Antwerp market also went to France and England.⁸

The Fuggers and the Welsers must have imported silver from central European mines into Antwerp although little evidence of this can be found in the Antwerp sources, but other merchants were also involved in the trade in specie. A record from the *Certificatieboek* of 1509 makes mention of a case involving a Captain Rouffort and his men who robbed several German merchants of their goods at the Brabant border; much of this merchandise consisted of silver ingots.⁹ Willem Rehlinger declared that Rouffort's men robbed him of four silver ingots weighing 255 marks, 18 grains, equal to over 3250 £ Artois. Likewise, Jan Annerot, a merchant from Bavaria declared that the same group robbed him of 11 pounds, 45 marks of fine silver equal to about 1880 £ Artois. Annerot also had coin in the amount of 200 Hungarian ducats, 151 gold *kuervorstens* (koerfursters) of Aachen, and various other monies.

⁵ Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. 2, 73.

⁶ SAA, *Certificatieboek* 5, 11 October 1542, f° 69.

⁷ SAA, *Certificatieboek* 5, 5 September 1542, f° 156v.

⁸ Kellenbenz, *Europäisches Kupfer*, 335

⁹ Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. II, 293–294, no. 2028.

By the middle of the century such a great quantity of silver was coming through Antwerp that the origin of much of it remains unclear. The Fuggers and other Germans were involved in the trade in Spanish silver. An appeal made by the Fugger factor in Antwerp, Mathias Ortel, indicates that between 1552 and 1556, the Fugger firm imported both minted and unminted Spanish silver valued at 127,406 £ Fl.¹⁰

Textiles, primarily fustians from the areas of Ulm and Augsburg, were also important German imports to the Antwerp market. Based on sketchy data from Charles V's two percent tax of 1552–53 on exports to Iberia, Wilfred Brulez has estimated Antwerp's yearly import of German fustians at about 100,000 pieces.¹¹ German fustians were also re-exported to England in large quantities. Just two examples from the export tax registers of 1543–45 are indicative of this lively trade; on 23 February 1545, Joris Schorer shipped 21 bales of fustians, several barrels of fustians, and two containers (*coffers*) of sugar to England,¹² and on 5 March 1545 the heirs of Lucas Rem shipped 13 bales of fustians and 2 small casks containing of 18 pieces of velour to London all together worth 500 £ Fl.¹³ While metals and textiles may have been the most important exports from Germany to Antwerp for the large merchant firms, there were many other goods routinely shipped from Germany to the Antwerp market under the rubric of 'dry goods.'

The Antwerp market held a central place in the overall commercial dealings of South German merchants. For some firms the bulk of the merchant enterprise may have been directed to and from the city. The 1545 yearly accounting for Haug-Langenaur-Link firm of Augsburg, for example, indicates that the value of goods in the Antwerp branch exceeded by far those in any of the other cities in which the firm operated.¹⁴

¹⁰ SAA, Certificatieboek 15, 18 May 1558, f° 513.

¹¹ W. Brulez, 'Le commerce international des Pays-Bas au XVI^e siècle: essai d'appréciation quantitative,' *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 46 (1968) 1205–1221. Brulez's analysis of the export tax records indicates the export to Iberia of 36,000 pieces of fustian. He admits that the rest of his estimates are very arbitrary. He says that some fustian exports must have gone to England and some were for Antwerp's own consumption.

¹² ARA, Rekenkamer 23363, 25 February 1545, f° 512v.

¹³ ARA, Rekenkamer 23363, 5 March 1545, f° 34.

¹⁴ SA, Literalien (3:106), *Handelsbuch von Anton Haug, Sen. 1532–1549*, f° 98v.

Exports to Southern Germany

The most important source for an investigation of German merchant exports to Germany from Antwerp for the sixteenth century is the Hundredth Penny Tax registers. Although these tax registers span only a two and a half year period, they offer a snapshot of the trade between Antwerp and Germany during a time of fairly steady economic growth for Antwerp despite the fact that the first six month period coincided with Charles V's war with Cleves which disrupted trade in some parts of northern Germany.¹⁵ Since war was a fact of life for the long-distance merchant in the sixteenth century the period from 1543–1545 probably reflects the normal commercial life of the Antwerp-German trade.

Exports to Germany were at their highest for the 1544 tax period. Not surprisingly, the value of the exports rose and fell in rough proportion to the number of individual shipments (see Figure 4). Although a two and a half year period is not long enough to form conclusions with great confidence, it appears that merchants made the highest number of shipments during the first and third quarters (January through March and July through September). These quarters correspond roughly with the *Coudemarkt* of Bergen op Zoom and the *Pinkstermarkt* of Antwerp. While it is true that Antwerp had become a year round market by the mid-sixteenth century, the English cloth fleet came to Antwerp only during the fairs and they may have brought more cloth during the *Coudemarkt* and the *Pinkstermarkt*.¹⁶ Given the place of English cloth in the export trade to Germany it is quite likely that this rhythm occurred as a result of the English rather than any decision on the part of the German merchants to transact more business during the winter and summer rather than the spring or fall.

The bulk of Antwerp's exports to Germany went to five cities: Augsburg, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Frankfurt, and Cologne (see Figure 5). Those most apt to send goods to these cities were, not surprisingly, merchants or factors of the great South German firms. Small-scale merchants or city-specific merchants more often than not conducted

¹⁵ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market, 177–192*. Herman van der Wee has characterized the 1540s and 1550s as a period of expansion following the troublesome 1520s and 1530s.

¹⁶ Florence Edler, 'The Van der Molen, Commission Merchants of Antwerp,' 115.

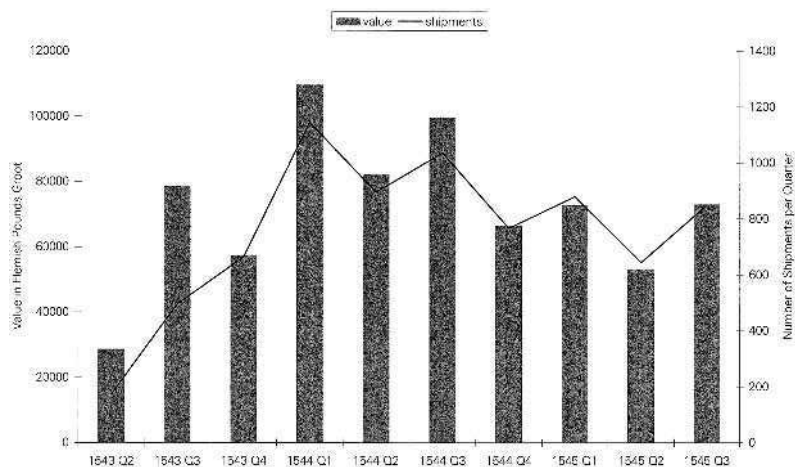


Figure 4. Number and Value of Overland Shipments from Antwerp to Germany by Quarter Year (Apr. 1543–Sep. 1545)
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–23364)

the trade with other German cities, such as those merchants involved in the trade with Strasbourg or Trier. Given the prominence of the many merchant firms from Augsburg and Nuremberg during the sixteenth century, it is not too surprising that the great firms from these two towns would occupy such an important place in the Antwerp export trade. The Fuggers, the Welsers, the Hochstetters, and the Tuchers were all families with a heavy involvement in both European and world-wide trade. But Augsburg merchants sent the vast majority of their export goods to Nuremberg; their home city was only of secondary importance.

Nuremberg was not a great fair town like Frankfurt, Leipzig, or even Erfurt. Large quantities of merchandise, however, were sent to the city because the wealth of its merchants rested on their import and export business with other parts of central and eastern Europe and not on the presence of a renowned fair.¹⁷ Nuremberg had a unique relationship with Nördlingen which was a fair town.¹⁸ It is possible that much of the merchandise sent from Antwerp to Nuremberg was

¹⁷ Gerald Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century: City Politics and Life between Middle Ages and Modern Times*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 130.

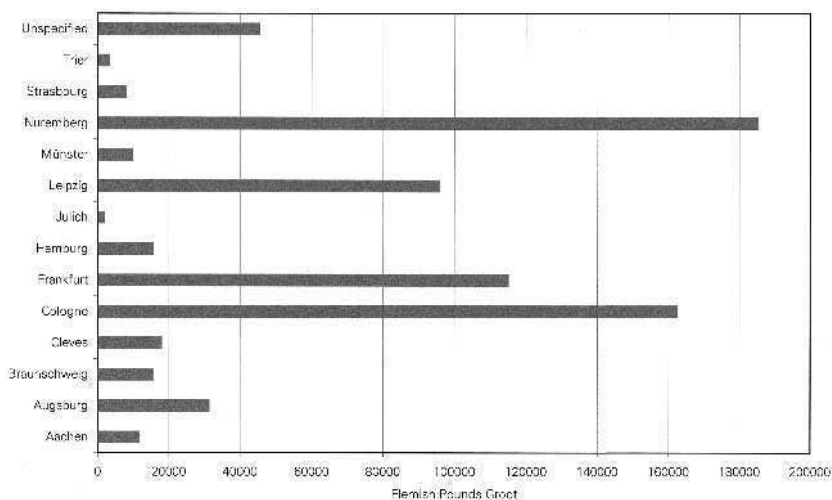
¹⁸ Rudolf Endres, 'Die Messestreitigkeiten zwischen Nürnberg und Nördlingen,' *Jahrbuch für Fränkische Landesforschung* 24 (1964), 1–19.

ultimately destined for the Nördlingen fair, although it is also true that some goods were sent directly from Antwerp to Nördlingen. Merchants exported primarily textiles, but they also sent large amounts of spices and a variety of miscellaneous goods including dyestuffs, pelts, leather, and various foodstuffs to Nuremberg from Antwerp.

Unlike native Nuremberg merchants with their emphasis on import and export activities, Augsburg merchants were more inclined to be risk-taking entrepreneurs. The Augsburgers added many speculative activities to their business mix.¹⁹ The fabulous wealth of these firms stands as testimony to their commercial diversification. One need only to look at the silver enterprises of the Fuggers and the Welsers, and the copper trade of the Fuggers, the Meutings, the Herwarts, and the Haug-Langenaur-Link firm to name only a few, to get an idea of the wealth of these merchant firms.²⁰ Their activities in Antwerp included many speculative ventures; they were regularly

Figure 5. Antwerp Exports to German Cities (1543–1545)

(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–23364)



¹⁹ Gerald Strauss, *Nuremberg in the Sixteenth Century*, 126–127.

²⁰ Reinhard Hildebrandt, 'Augsburger und Nürnberger Kupferhandel, 1500–1619,' in *Schwerpunkte der Kupferproduktion und des Kupferhandels in Europa, 1500–1650*, edited by Hermann Kellenbenz, (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1977), 190–224; and Ekkehard Westermann, 'Silbererzeugung, Silberhandel und Wechselgeschäft im Thüringer Saigerhandel von 1460–1620,' *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 70 (1983): 192–214.

involved in financial transactions on the Antwerp Bourse, and invested heavily in municipal *rentes*.

Although Augsburg was home to a dynamic textile industry and metal working industry, the city's rich merchant and banking firms were what brought Augsburg to the forefront of world trade in the sixteenth century. It is quite likely that the greater part of German imports to Antwerp passed through the hands of the great Augsburg merchant firms, and merchants from Augsburg were responsible for the greatest volume of exports from Antwerp to Germany during much of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, only four percent of the total number of shipments from Antwerp to Germany was destined for Augsburg. These shipments accounted for five percent of the total value of Antwerp's exports to Germany, about 39,900 £ Fl. This is in contrast to Nuremberg, which received sixteen percent of Antwerp's export shipments to Germany, by value totaling about 190,000 £ Fl. or twenty-three percent of the total value of all exports to Germany.

Neither Augsburg nor Nuremberg had the important fairs like the other cities which were predominately re-export markets. Frankfurt am Main with its important fairs, on the other hand, was very much a focal point for trade in southwestern Germany throughout much of the medieval and early modern periods. Only fifty-one merchants were involved in the export trade from Antwerp to Augsburg, while 129 merchants participated in the export trade from Antwerp to Nuremberg during the period of the Hundredth Penny Tax. Surprisingly, even though Antwerp's exports to Nuremberg totaled more than 190,000 £ Fl., and Antwerp's exports to Frankfurt amounted to just over 115,000 £ Fl. during the same period, 209 merchants were involved in the Frankfurt trade, and far fewer of these merchants were Germans. Furthermore, with the exception of three High Germans, Wolf Puschinger, Anton Haug, Wolf Reitweiser, and the merchant of Cologne, Jan Ghieten,²¹ no single merchant sent exports totaling much more than 3500 £ Fl. from Antwerp to Frankfurt during the 1543-45 period. Like Augsburg or Nuremberg, the most important export products going to Frankfurt were textiles, but many

²¹ The identity of Jan Ghieten is a bit of a mystery. W. Brulez identifies him as a Fleming (see: *Firma della Faille*, pg. 494), but Antwerp sources indicate that he may indeed have been from Cologne. In SAA, *Certificatieboek* 5, 23 February 1542, f^o 776 he is listed as acting as the agent of Jaspas Terloon (of Cologne) and is called a *poorter* and *burgher* of Cologne.

merchants of more modest means as well as scores of non-Germans participated in this trade.

Leipzig ranked fourth among German cities as a destination for exports from Antwerp. German merchants dominated this trade just as they did the export trade with other German cities, but unlike the principal South German cities, the great firms of Augsburg and Nuremberg were much less active here. Some of the most important merchants engaged in Antwerp's trade with Leipzig were from the Leipzig area or even merchants from Breslau (Wrocław). Merchants from Leipzig included Heinrich Preusser, Wolf Puschinger who also occasionally served as an agent for Breslau merchants,²² Sigmond Brudegem, and Hans Trantman who, like Puschinger, was an agent for Breslau merchants. Isaac Horninch, a merchant from Breslau, was the eighth most important merchant (by value of exports) in the Antwerp to Leipzig trade. The fact that so many of these Leipzig merchants worked for Breslau merchants coupled with the long-time presence of merchants from Breslau in Antwerp²³ indicates that much of what they shipped to Leipzig was destined farther east to the markets of Breslau. Due perhaps to its distance from Antwerp merchants shipped goods such as sugar and miscellaneous dry goods to Leipzig only in much smaller amounts than to the other South German cities.

Merchants from places like Ulm and Strasbourg also participated in the export trade between Antwerp and southern German cities, despite the size disadvantage that their firms may have had compared to the great firms of Augsburg and Nuremberg. The cloth merchants Joris and Lenart Schorer, of Ulm figured prominently in the Antwerp trade, as did the Miegh firm of Strasbourg. Even though Frankfurt was an important gateway city for the distribution of goods throughout southern Germany and the most common place for merchants from the commercially less significant cities to send their wares, some merchants found it expedient to send goods directly from Antwerp to cities like Ulm, Strasbourg, Worms, and Speyer. That said, merchants sent only six shipments totaling a mere 247 £ Fl. from Antwerp to Ulm during the entire two and a half year period of the Hundredth Penny Tax. Joris Schorer sent one shipment of pepper amounting to 51 £ Fl., and Wolf Reitweiser who was an Antwerp agent for

²² SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 11 October, 1542, f° 69.

²³ See Alfons K.L. Thijs, 'Een "gilde" van Breslause kooplieden te Antwerpen.'

the Griek firm of Ulm sent two shipments of English cloth totaling 160 £ Fl. The other three shipments were miscellaneous goods sent to Ulm by Italian and Spanish merchants.

The export trade from Antwerp to Strasbourg was a bit more involved than for Ulm during this period. Textiles, Antwerp's most important export product, again made up the majority of exports to Strasbourg accounting for 75% of the total. Sugar, rather than spices, was second in importance. Strasbourg was not a particularly important destination for the exports of the great South German firms, although they all sent at least some of their Antwerp exports there.

Antwerp exports to Worms were really very insignificant amounting to only 132 £ Fl. from 1543–1545, and none of the merchants sending goods to Worms were Germans. Exports to Speyer for the same period, while slight compared to cities like Nuremberg and Frankfurt, amounted to 721 £ Fl. In the case of the Speyer trade many more Germans were involved, including the shipping firms of both Hans Cleynhans and Matheus Leder. These Germans were primarily freight transporters engaged in overland transport between Antwerp and Italy. They concentrated their business on hauling goods for Italian merchants, but they also exported some goods on their own account.

The Spice Trade

In the fifteenth century one of Antwerp's most important imports from Germany was spices which came from the Levant via Venice and then across the Alps to German markets. In August 1490 for instance, Lenaerd Heertsvoegel, merchant of Nuremberg, imported two packs of spices into the city via Cologne, and Willem Moer, also of Nuremberg, imported seven packs and two barrels of spices directly from Nuremberg.²⁴ The Antwerp merchants, Balthasar Wouters, Henric Tesch, Robrecht van den Sport, and Daneel de Amutere each bought spices in Bonn (one bale and one pack, nine bales, seven bales and five packs, and one pack respectively) and sent the goods to Antwerp on the wagons of four transporters.²⁵ Germans, too, brought spices from Bonn to Antwerp. The Nuremberg merchant Everaert Thielmeyer sent five bales of spices from Bonn to Antwerp in October, 1490.²⁶

²⁴ SAA, Certificatieboek 2, 12 August 1490, f^o 15v; 18 August 1490, f^o 16v.

²⁵ SAA, Certificatieboek 2, 28 September 1490, f^o 21v.

²⁶ SAA, Certificatieboek 2, 4 October 1490, f^o 23.

Because of the shift in the Asian spice trade into the hands of the Portuguese seaborne traders who bypassed the more traditional Mediterranean trade, Germans were only rarely importing spices to Antwerp by the sixteenth century. However, the Fuggers often purchased large amounts of pepper at the Lisbon market, and shipped them to Antwerp for sale. On 5 July 1510 the Fugger factor in Antwerp declared before the city aldermen that Ulrich and Jakob Fugger and Hans Imhoff purchased some 20 bales and 8 sacks of pepper in Lisbon and sent them by sea to Antwerp.²⁷ But this was rather rare. Most German firms simply purchased pepper and other spices in Antwerp for shipment to German towns.

A variety of Augsburg and Nuremberg merchants, including the great firms, engaged in the spice trade from Antwerp to Germany and in particular to Nuremberg. Twenty-three merchants (all but three were Germans) exported pepper from Antwerp to Nuremberg, and of those only nine merchants accounted for over 85% of all the pepper sent to Nuremberg. (See Table 2 for a list of the most important merchants sending pepper and ginger from Antwerp to Germany.)

One of the largest of these pepper exporters, the firm of Andries and Simon Imhoff, was concerned almost exclusively with the trade in spices between Antwerp and Nuremberg. The great merchant firms rarely specialized in any one product (although this was rather common among the smaller scale merchants), preferring a certain amount of diversity in their product lines. The Imhoff firm, however, was not much interested in other goods, at least at the Antwerp market. Of the other important spice merchants, Wolf Puschinger and Willem van Montfort were likely acting as agents for others, but Erasmus Schetz and the Bartolomeo Welser firm were also significant players in the spice trade with Germany. Many different merchants were likewise involved in the spice trade between Antwerp and Augsburg. Sebastian Neidhart, Hans Rucker, Lucas Rem, Hartman Schmaltz, Christoffel Manlich, and others all had a hand in this business.

Spice exports made up 17% of the exports by value from Antwerp to Frankfurt listed in the Hundredth Penny Tax registers, with pepper accounting for over half of this total. These spice exports are much less than the 32% that spices comprised for Nuremberg. The Antwerp merchant Jan de la Faille sent more pepper to Frankfurt than any

²⁷ SAA, Schepenbrieven 137, 5 July 1510, f^o 114. A Scottish vessel seized the ship and its cargo of pepper off the coast of England while it was on its way to Antwerp.

Table 2. Value of Pepper and Ginger Shipments to Germany by Principal Merchants in Flemish Pounds (1543–1545)
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–64)

Pepper Shipments					
	Augsburg	Frankfurt	Leipzig	Nuremberg	Germany (unspecified)
Erasmus Schetz		2412.50	6115.00	5778.20	1527.12
A. & S. Imhoff				11274.55	581.00
Wolf Puschinger	300.00	655.00	3715.00	5875.00	625.00
Bartholomeo Welser	78.00	980.27		5670.82	627.50
Jacob Welser		1104.00		5287.25	1939.00
Willem van Montfort		75.00	221.00	4217.50	235.00
Lucas Rem				3790.00	
Jan de la Faille		3087.00		252.00	
Ginger Shipments					
	Augsburg	Frankfurt	Leipzig	Nuremberg	Germany (unspecified)
A. & S. Imhoff		200.00		1279.00	118.00
Martin Lopez		672.00			
Ch. Hochstetter		480.00		119.00	
Wolf Puschinger		370.00	190.00	140.00	
Geo. & Ph. Ingolt		296.83			

other merchant, but others such as Erasmus Schetz, Jacob Welser, and Andreas Lixhals of Munich also sent large quantities of pepper there. The Andreas and Simon Imhoff firm which figured so prominently in the pepper trade with Nuremberg merely dabbled in the Frankfurt spice business, sending only a few shipments of cloves, cinnamon and ginger there. Erasmus Schetz and Wolf Puschinger largely controlled pepper exports to Leipzig, accounting for 37% and 22% of the exports respectively. The next largest pepper exporter to Leipzig was the Breslau merchant Isaac Horninch whose exports, while sizable, accounted for only 8% of all the pepper exported there.

Spices, including pepper, were usually sold by the sack weighing about 224 Antwerp pounds (roughly 105 kilograms) with three sacks forming a pack. The prices for pepper listed in the Hundredth Penny Tax registers did not vary significantly over time although the price dropped slightly during January 1545.²⁸ A pack of pepper was most

²⁸ Values given in the Hundredth Penny Tax registers (ARA, Chambre des

often valued at 70 £ Fl. Based on these figures, pepper exports to all German destinations totaled about 508 metric tons during the thirty-month period of the Hundredth Penny Tax.

Occasionally pepper was sent to Germany in bales just a bit greater in value than one sack (about 25 £ Fl.). Other spices such as ginger and cinnamon were sent in either packs like pepper, or in casks and small barrels. The price for ginger was somewhat less than for pepper. The price on 12 February 1544 was 20 gr. Fl. per Antwerp pound, but had risen to 24 gr. Fl. per Antwerp pound by March 1544. A cask of cinnamon (the weight varied, but averaged about 240–300 Antwerp pounds or about 112–140 kilograms) ranged in value from 25–40 £ Fl. The price per Antwerp pound listed in the tax registers on 12 February 1544 was 2 sch. 6 gr. Fl.

Cloth Trade

By the twelfth century, the cloth producing cities of Flanders had succeeded in creating an urban textile industry which concentrated on high quality cloths that were much in demand all over Europe, from Novgorod to the cities of the Mediterranean. Native wool production could not keep up with demand, and English and eventually Spanish wool had to be imported in great quantities to feed the Flemish textile industry.

Brabant also rose to an important position in the textile industry although a bit later than Flanders (at least by the late thirteenth century). By the fourteenth century, Flanders and Brabant, along with Tuscany, became the most highly industrialized and urbanized areas in medieval Western Europe due almost exclusively to their textile industries. This emphasis on cloth manufacture was quite possibly the main reason that Flemish towns ignored the emergent maritime shipping industry that was eventually dominated by others, particularly by the German Hanse and, much later, the towns of Holland and Zealand.²⁹

During the fourteenth century, the urban based textile industry of the southern Low Countries underwent a period of crisis. As England

Comptes 23357–64) only rarely gave the price of pepper per pound. When price per pound was given it was usually 25 gr. Fl. (for instance on 23 and 31 August 1543, and on 27 September, 1543, however on 15 January 1544 the price was listed in two separate shipments as 22 gr. and 21 3/4 gr. Fl. per pound.

²⁹ Henri Pirenne, 'The Place of the Netherlands in the Economic History of Medieval Europe,' *The Economic History Review*. 2 (1929): 20–40. Reprinted in *Histoire économique de l'occident médiévale*, (Bruges 1951).

began to produce its own high quality cloths and began to export less wool, the urban textile industry in the Low Countries started to decline. Cloths produced in the Flemish and Brabantine countryside were known as 'new draperies.' Weavers were able to produce these new textiles cheaply, although their quality was substantially inferior compared to the urban cloths. The new draperies generated such a great demand that they began to compete in the marketplace with the high-quality traditional cloths. A rural industry emerged by the sixteenth century which displaced the luxury cloth industries of Bruges, Ieper, Ghent, Douai, and others. As we have seen, Antwerp (which had no real textile industry to speak of by the fifteenth century) profited greatly from the misfortune of its neighbors by welcoming English cloth merchants and serving as a transit market for both English cloths and for the new draperies of the Low Countries.

South German towns had long been important destinations for the cloth of Flanders, but by the sixteenth century shipments of English cloth far outnumbered those of Flemish cloths. The traditional English woolen cloths, while still very much in demand all over Europe, were, nevertheless, beginning to be overtaken in some markets by the cheaper northern English kersey cloths, and the unfamiliarity of German merchants with kerses led to some interesting problems. Because the cloth buyer was often dependent on agents and correspondents, and the fact that many merchants had no place to show their goods, the buyer was often not able to inspect the goods for himself. In most cases this did not present a problem; merchants relied on agents who were often relatives or experienced businessmen in their own right. But even a well-known and seasoned agent could become the subject of a dispute when the product was new and its properties not well understood.

In 1554 Wolf Puschinger, acting as the agent for Jacob Herbroet of Augsburg, purchased a very large quantity of English kersey cloths. The deal was so large that Puschinger needed to engage several merchant firms in order to acquire all the cloth he was contracted to purchase. The Schorer firm of Ulm procured one lot of 344 pieces while in England. Puschinger purchased 144 pieces from William Brachton, a merchant of London, and another 1052 pieces from an English broker resident in Antwerp by the name of Thomas Doen.³⁰

³⁰ SAA, Certificatieboek 10, 22 September 1555, f° 138; 3 October 1555, f° 138v-139.

Puschinger sent all of these cloths to Jacob Herbrodt in Augsburg in shipments totaling twenty-nine packs.

Herbrodt accused Puschinger of sending him odd lots because the lengths were not uniform. It would appear that kersey cloth from northern England was not under the same strict regulation regarding length as the fine English wool cloth. Several *lakenbereyders* (cloth preparers) of Antwerp and several English merchants certified on behalf of Puschinger that the kersey cloth sent to Herbrodt was all good, saleable kersey and furthermore that kersey cloth could vary in length anywhere from 21 to 22 ells.³¹ Perhaps if Herbrodt had had the chance to inspect the cloths at the time of purchase he would have discovered this for himself.

Despite the popularity of English cloths in most parts of Germany, the textile products of the Low Countries were never eliminated from the export market. Flemish woolen cloths produced in Ieper, Bruges, and Ghent were no longer as important as they had once been for the economy of the Low Countries, but they still found a market among the well-to-do. The commercial success story for the Low Countries' textile industry focused on the new cloths of Holland and Brabant, and the sayes and satins of the Flemish towns. Merchants shipped these products out of Antwerp to Germany in great quantities throughout the sixteenth century (see Figure 6).

Nuremberg was the major destination for textiles coming out of Antwerp. English cloth and kerses together accounted for over 45% of the cloth shipments to Nuremberg, or about 50,240 £ Fl. Cloths for which no specific origin was given made up 18% of textiles sent to Nuremberg, while the remainder consisted of the various textiles of both the southern and northern Netherlands. The Augsburg merchant firms most interested in cloth included the Jenisch family and Anton Haug (together with his partners Hans Langenauer and Ulrich Link). They were the two most important merchant concerns that shipped English cloth from Antwerp to Nuremberg. Table 3 shows the value of exports for the most important merchants involved in shipping English cloth to Germany.

Anton Haug sent 4630.00 £ Fl. and Bartolomeo Jenisch sent 3094.00 £ Fl. worth of English cloth to Nuremberg. Hartman Schmaltz, the sometime Antwerp factor of William Smitmer of

³¹ SAA, Certificatieboek 10, 25 October 1555, f° 140; 26 October 1555, f° 149; 14 January 1556, f° 156.

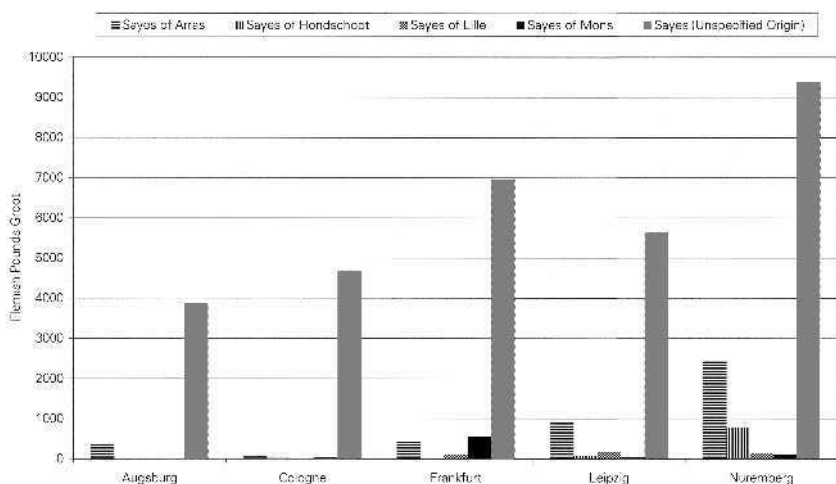


Figure 6. Export of Sayes to Selected German Cities (1543-1545)
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357-23364)

Nuremberg, was also a large importer of English cloth into Nuremberg. Kersey was as important for the Nuremberg market as the traditional English cloth was (the value of kersey sent to Nuremberg was 25,059 £ Fl. compared with 25,181 £ Fl. for traditional English cloth). Although the great German firms who dealt in textiles imported some kersey to Nuremberg, much smaller firms also capitalized on this business. For example, Hans Paulus of Nuremberg, a substantial merchant but not active in the Antwerp market to the extent of the great firms, was the single largest exporter of kersey to that city, sending shipments valued at over 4200 £ Fl.

Traditional English cloth and English kerseys also predominated in Augsburg, accounting for about 40% of the total textile exports (10,609 £ Fl.) from Antwerp to Augsburg. Two merchants, Bartholomeo Jenisch of Augsburg, and the factor *par excellence*, Wolf Puschinger of Leipzig, together sent the greatest amount of English cloth to Augsburg accounting for over 50% of all the English cloth sent there. The only Englishman to appear in the Hundredth Penny records and actually shipping goods to Germany on his own was Richard Hill. He sent a mere 100 £ Fl. of English cloth to Augsburg.³² The

³² Hill's presence in the Hundredth Penny records is a bit of an anomaly because English merchants were exempt from this tax for the most part. Obviously this exemption did not apply to Englishmen sending goods overland to Germany.

largest exporter of English kersey was the Augsburg merchant Christoffel Mangolt, who was responsible for over a third of the kerses sent to Augsburg. Table 4 shows the value of exports for the principal merchants sending English kersey to Germany.

Table 3. Value of English Cloth Exports to Germany by Principal Merchants (1543–1545) in Flemish Pounds
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer 23357–64)

	Augsburg	Frankfurt	Leipzig	Nuremberg	Germany (unspecified)
Erasmus Schetz		465.00	11005.00		160.00
Wolf Puschingher	1805.00	3910.00	4395.00	1737.00	2030.00
Anton Haug	715.00	3525.00	160.00	4630.00	660.00
B. Jenisch	2145.00			3094.00	
Lucas Rem	615.00	800.00		2123.00	75.00
Wolf Reitweiser	170.00	2555.70	140.00	343.00	375.00
Hans Spiegelberch		360.00	5985.00		
Jan Ghieten		3018.33		75.00	
Hartman Schmaltz		345.00	35.00	2760.00	1200.00
S. Liebmauwer				1678.00	
Wm. van Montfort	80.00	600.00	795.00	1465.00	
Heinrich Preuser		370.00	1175.00	1200.00	
Jan Alewyne		1745.00	352.00		
Jan de Haze		1729.00			
S. Brudegem			1670.00		
Hans Paulus				1580.00	
Andries Smit				1305.00	

Table 4. Value of Kersey Cloth Exports to Germany by Principal Merchants (1543–1545) in Flemish Pounds
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–64)

	Augsburg	Frankfurt	Leipzig	Nuremberg	Germany (unspecified)
Hans Paulus	170.00			4262.00	
W. van Montfort	189.00	97.00		3599.55	45.00
Lucas Rem				2381.00	
Wolf Puschingher	900.00			2320.00	190.00
Erasmus Schetz			360.00	1878.00	90.00
Andries Smit					1695.00
Fr. de Behault		276.00		1474.25	
Ch. Mangolt	1058.00			50.00	

English cloths and kerses accounted for about 40% of Antwerp's textile exports to Frankfurt. The most important exporters of English

cloth to Frankfurt were Wolf Puschinger, Anton Haug, Wolf Reitweiser, Jan Ghieten, and the Antwerp merchants, Jan Alewyne and Jan de Haze. Together these six merchants exported over 50% of the English cloths sent to Frankfurt during this period. To be sure, these merchants often acted as agents for other South Germans. For instance, early in 1542 Wolf Reitweiser sent a load of English cloth to Frankfurt on behalf of Conrad Griek and Cie. of Ulm.³³

Exports of English cloth from Antwerp to Leipzig were largely in the hands of Erasmus Schetz whose total English cloth shipments of the two and a half year period were valued at 11,005 £ Fl. The next largest exporter of English cloth to Leipzig was Hans Spiegelberch from the area of Braunschweig. Spiegelberch sent 5985 £ Fl. worth of English cloth to Leipzig. Kersey was not particularly important for the Leipzig business; total exports of kersey cloths to Leipzig totaled only 1413 £ Fl.

Virtually all of the English cloth sent to Germany from Antwerp was valued at a standard 5 £ Fl. per piece for the purposes of the Hundredth Penny Tax; however, the actual prices paid for this cloth at the Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom fairs varied greatly. While the price of English cloth ranged from about 3 £ Fl. for a piece of ordinary gray cloth to about 16–18 £ Fl. for a very fine white cloth, the average price per piece (the standard length of a piece of English cloth was about 30 yards) was more likely to be in the 6–8 £ Fl. range.³⁴ This indicates, in general, a higher value of shipments than the assessed value would suggest. The Hundredth Penny Tax registers indicate that the price per piece of kersey cloth (a piece of kersey was around 17–18 yards) ranged from 1£ 10 sch. Fl. to 2 £ Fl. De Smedt reports the price for kersey listed in the *Brabantse* toll of 1551 as 1£ 13 sch. 4 gr.,³⁵ so it would appear that the price of kersey cloth did not change much during the middle years of the sixteenth century.

Although English cloth made up the bulk of Antwerp's exports to Germany, a wide variety of cloths from the Low Countries were also in high demand in the South German towns. Exports of sayes to Germany (see Table 5) were greater for Nuremberg than for any

³³ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 24 February 1542, f° 9v.

³⁴ Oscar de Smedt, *De Engelse Natie te Antwerpen*, 341–347. These tables, compiled by de Smedt, show the English cloth purchases (including purchase price) of the Antwerp cloth merchant Frans de Pape for the period 1538–1546.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 434.

other town, and all of the varieties of sayes that appear to have been available were sent to Nuremberg.³⁶

In terms of quantity, if not necessarily in value, shipments of sayes to Nuremberg approached even those of English kersey cloth which was so much in demand in Nuremberg. Since a piece of kersey measured about 17–18 yards and a piece of saye measured roughly 21 yards, it is quite possible that the total yardage of sayes surpassed that for kersey. Other textiles of the Low Countries were also important for southern Germany including the demi-ostades (half-worsted, half-linen cloth) and satins of the Low Countries.

Table 5. Value of Saye Exports to Germany by Principal Merchants (1543–1545) in Flemish Pounds
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer 23357–64)

	Augsburg	Frankfurt	Leipzig	Nuremberg	Germany (unspecified)
Anton Haug	60.00	2122.50		2125.00	613.00
Wolf Puschingier	2275.00	362.00		745.00	817.00
W. van Montfort	30.00	249.00	732.40	1733.50	237.00
Heinrich Preuser		480.00	1839.00	861.50	
Hans Putz	1144.50			1551.00	602.00
Adriaen de Katere				2011.90	
Jan Ghieten		1509.80	70.00		
B. Jenisch	960.00			545.00	195.00
Andries Lixhals		165.00		1399.10	

The cloth of Mechelen (Malines) was shipped in greater quantities to Leipzig, Frankfurt, and Nuremberg than any other traditional woolen cloth of the southern Netherlands, and Amsterdam cloth was the most important northern Netherlands textile product sent from Antwerp to Germany, surpassing even the English kerseys in value for Frankfurt and Augsburg. The role that the textiles of the Low Countries (particularly those of the southern Netherlands) played in the trade with Germany should not be underestimated. Antwerp has been viewed as a transshipment center for foreign products, but roughly 30% of all exports to Germany by the mid-1540s were man-

³⁶ Most of the entries for sayes listed in the Hundredth Penny Tax records do not specify the town of origin, however, some types of sayes were identified by town such as: Sayes of Arras, Sayes of Lille, Sayes of Mons (Bergen), and Sayes of Hondschoot.

ufactures of the Low Countries.³⁷ While Antwerp's economy hinged upon the import of goods such as English cloth and Portuguese spices, local products were still a viable export item despite the decline of the great Flemish woolen cloth industry.

While the great merchant firms imported the lion's share of the textiles of the southern Netherlands into Germany just as they did the textiles from England, small-scale merchants devoted a much larger share of their business to the cloths of the Low Countries in many cases. Looking to the Nuremberg market as an example, Willem van Montfort shipped demi-ostades worth 489 £ Fl. to Nuremberg. This amounted to only 2% of his Nuremberg business. Bartolomeo Jenisch sent demi-ostades worth 420 £ Fl. amounting to 4% of his Nuremberg exports. The Augsburg textile merchant Hans Putz sent 619 £ Fl. of demi-ostades to Nuremberg. Putz was the largest importer of demi-ostades into Nuremberg accounting for 12% of his business. By comparison, Marten Beschoren sent only 78 £ Fl. worth of demi-ostades to Nuremberg which accounted for 13% of his business, and Hieronimus Wernla's 122 £ Fl. of demi-ostades accounted 21% of his shipments to Nuremberg. Table 6 shows the value of demi-ostade shipments to Germany by the principal merchants for this product.

The heavy woolen cloths of Flanders were not shipped to Germany in very great quantities, but Willem van Montfort sent 102 £ Fl. worth of the cloth of Bruges, amounting to a small fraction of the value of his 20,673 £ Fl. in exports to Nuremberg, and Hartman Schmaltz (Smals) sent 64 £ Fl. of Bruges cloth there. The satins of Flanders, particularly of Bruges, and also those of Valenciennes, were, on the other hand, quite popular. Nicholas and Paul Burlamacchi (who also had some business dealings with the Ulstadt firm of Augsburg) sent 510 £ Fl. worth of the satins of Bruges to Nuremberg, amounting to 100% of their Nuremberg business.

Other textiles from the Netherlands also made up a considerable portion of the textile exports from Antwerp to Augsburg. Sayes and demi-ostades accounted for 6115 £ Fl., heavy woolen cloths from Flanders and Brabant totaled 390 £ Fl., and satins including satins from Bruges and Valenciennes and various other textiles from the southern Netherlands totaled 784 £ Fl. The largest exporters of sayes from Antwerp to Augsburg were Wolf Puschinger and the Augsburg

³⁷ Filip Vermeylen, 'De Export vanuit de Zuidelijke Nederlanden naar Duitsland,' 74.

Table 6. Value of Demi-Ostade Exports to Germany by Principal Merchants (1543–1545) in Flemish Pounds
(Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–64)

	Augsburg	Frankfurt	Leipzig	Nuremberg	Germany (unspecified)
Hans Putz	344.85			596.00	75.00
W. van Montfort	72.95	68.00	157.20	536.00	
B. Jenisch	310.00			470.00	
Jan Ghieten		592.83	8.00		
Isaac Horninch			549.00		
Heinrich Preuser			434.00	50.00	

merchant, Hans Putz. The exports of these two merchants accounted for 70% of all the sayes sent to Augsburg during the period 1543–1545. Cloth valued at 3299 £ Fl. was of northern Netherlands origin, including 3253 £ Fl. of Amsterdam cloth. Wolf Puschinger was singularly responsible for sending two thirds of all Amsterdam cloth exports to Augsburg.

Exports to Frankfurt of textiles from the southern Netherlands were not as dominated by the few large-scale merchants as they were for Augsburg or Nuremberg. While Anton Haug's exports of sayes to Frankfurt amounted to almost 20% and Jan Ghieten's amounted to 14% of all sayes sent to the city, the rest of the saye exports were spread across 30 merchants, about half of whom were Germans. Exports of satins from the southern Netherlands were, for the most part, in the hands of the small-scale merchants, both Germans and Flemings. The great firms seem to have had little interest in this trade.

Not surprisingly, it was the merchants from Leipzig (representing, in some cases, merchants of Breslau) who dominated the export of sayes to Leipzig. Heinrich Preusser of Leipzig, often as the factor for the Schwicker firm of Leipzig, and Hans Trantman, sometime agent of Breslau merchants, together accounted for over 35% of all exports of sayes to Leipzig. The Breslau merchant, Isaac Horninch, was the largest exporter of demi-ostades to Leipzig accounting for 25% of the value of all shipments of demi-ostades to that city.

The values listed in the Hundredth Penny Tax registers for the textiles of the Low Countries varied considerably from product to product. A heavy woolen cloth from Flanders could fetch a price as high as 12 £ Fl. per piece, but the price was usually around 4 £ to 5 £ 10 sch. Fl. per piece which put it in roughly the same price range

as English cloth. The price of Amsterdam cloth remained fairly constant during the course of the Hundredth Penny tax period at about 2 £ 8 sch. Fl. per piece. The cloth of Mechelen ranged between 2 £ 10 sch. and 3 £ Fl. This was about the same as the price for the cloth of Leuven. The price of sayes hovered around 1 £ 4 sch. Fl. per piece (about 21 or 22 yards),³⁸ but could reach 1 £ 10 sch. on rare occasions. The short demi-ostades and satins of the Low Countries were the least expensive textiles sent to Germany. Demi-ostades sold for between 10 and 15 sch. Fl. per piece and satins fetched about the same price.

Wool Trade

Since so many of the Germans sent textile products from Antwerp to Germany it should come as no surprise that wool was not a particularly important export to Germany. Indeed, some German merchants even found a market in Antwerp for wool from the Rhineland. During the last decade of the fifteenth century merchants, mostly from Cologne, imported 166 sacks of wool overland from Germany. Records for this same period indicate that only forty-one sacks and two bales were exported out of Antwerp to Germany, all in one shipment to Frankfurt. Wool from both England and Spain came into Antwerp by sea, but this wool seems to have been more often sent on to other cloth producing towns of the Low Countries rather than to towns in Germany.

During the period of the Hundredth Penny tax no wool was sent to Leipzig, and only one sack of wool went to Frankfurt. Some wool was shipped to Germany for which no specific town was mentioned as a destination, amounting to 49 sacks and 28 bales together valued at 970 £ Fl. (of which 16 sacks worth 282 £ Fl. was specifically identified as English wool), a substantial but not a significant amount. Surprisingly, however, wool accounted for twenty percent of the total value of all exports from Antwerp to Augsburg (8056 £ Fl.), likely sent there to fuel the town's own textile industry and for further shipment to other South German textile centers or perhaps even to Italian towns.

³⁸ Guy de Poerck, *La draperie médiévale en Flandre et en Artois: technique et terminologie*, Werken Uitgegeven door de Faculteit van de Wijsbegeerte en Letteren, Rijksuniversiteit te Gent, vol. 110, (Bruges: De Tempel, 1951), 252–53, and 256.

Merchants like Anton Haug, the heirs of Lucas Rem, and Conrad Rehlinger all had a hand in exporting wool from Antwerp to Augsburg, but the largest wool exporter to Augsburg was Christoffel Hochstetter who sent 2722 £ Fl. worth of wool, of which 1470 £ Fl. was expressly identified as English wool. It is unclear if Christoffel was acting on behalf of the Hochstetter firm in the Hundredth Penny records or not. Antwerp sources indicate that around 1542 he was serving as the factor of the Augsburg merchant Marcus Ulstadt.³⁹ Anton Haug, who was active in the fustian trade between Germany and England, was another important wool trader, importing roughly 1690 £ Fl. worth of wool. Several non-German merchants exported wool to Augsburg too. The Antwerp merchant Jan de la Faille was the most prominent; he sent 574 £ Fl. worth of wool (his only export item to Augsburg).

German merchants did send some wool to Nuremberg, although much less often than to Augsburg. Of the 2386 £ Fl. worth of wool exported to Nuremberg, 955 £ Fl. was English wool. Many of the same Germans who sent wool to Augsburg were also responsible for shipping wool to Nuremberg, merchants like Anton Haug, the heirs of Lucas Rem, and Christoffel Hochstetter. It was Willem van Montfort, however, who exported the largest amount of wool from Antwerp to Nuremberg during this period, accounting for 993 £ Fl. or just over 41% of the wool shipments to Nuremberg.

By the 1560s some enterprising German merchants were even sending English wool overland from Antwerp to Venice. In January, 1561 Hans Putz sent twenty-five sacks of English wool to Venice that he had purchased in Bruges, but that were prepared and packed in Antwerp. Joris Hochstetter sent fifty-six sacks of English wool to Venice the following year.⁴⁰ Hans Putz was acting as the factor for Marcus Rem. Putz sent at least 200 sacks of wool to Venice for the Rem firm during the 1560s. Putz also arranged to have English kerseys and Hondshoote sayes sent to Augsburg or Nuremberg and then on to Venice for the same firms on several different occasions.⁴¹

³⁹ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 16 February 1542, f° 96.

⁴⁰ SAA, Certificatieboek 17, 19 February 1561, f° 148, and Certificatieboek 18, 29 April 1562, f° 310.

⁴¹ SAA, Certificatieboek 18, 2 April 1562, f° 200; 1 October 1562, f° 379v; Certificatieboek 19, 13 May 1563, f° 319. The sayes and kerseys were purchased in Antwerp.

Sugar Trade

Sugar was another product exported from Antwerp to Germany in fairly large quantities.⁴² Antwerp sugar bakers and at least some immigrant Italian sugar merchants had developed a significant sugar industry by the sixteenth century, allowing Antwerp to surpass Venice as the principal sugar market in Europe.⁴³ Antwerp sugar came most often from the Atlantic islands of São Tomé, Madeira, and the Canaries. What percentage of sugar exports to Germany were refined in Antwerp is really very difficult to determine. What the records do tell is that merchants exported São Tomé sugar to Germany in larger quantities than other sugars. Vincent Bourdon, one of the two dozen or more sugar refiners active in Antwerp by mid-century,⁴⁴ sent at least some São Tomé sugar to Nuremberg between 1543 and 1545, but sugar refiners themselves do not seem to have been too involved in actually exporting sugar to Germany. For the most part, the export business remained in the hands of long-distance merchants. Nevertheless, no particular merchants dominated the trade in sugar as they did the textile trade.

The total value of São Tomé sugar exported from Antwerp to Nuremberg, for instance, was about 4128 £ Fl. Exports to Nuremberg of sugar with no specific place of origin totaled 1444 £ Fl., while brown sugar (*sucre candi*) shipments totaled 641 £ Fl. Canaries sugar totaled 907 £ Fl., and Madeira sugar totaled 228 £ Fl. The most important merchants in the Nuremberg sugar trade, however, were the great merchants and their agents, such as Willem van Montfort who sent 763 £ Fl. of São Tomé sugar to Nuremberg. But other merchants of more modest means also participated in the sugar trade to Nuremberg. The Nyenlandt brothers of Nuremberg sent 320 £ Fl. of São Tomé sugar, Bernard Outersy of Frankfurt sent 119 £ Fl. of São Tomé and 100 £ Fl. of Canaries sugar while his sometime Antwerp factor, Jan Boutry, sent an additional 388 £ Fl. worth of São Tomé sugar. The Bavarian merchant Sebastian Liebmauwer sent 134 £ Fl. of Madeira sugar to Nuremberg, more than any other merchant exporting sugar from that island.

⁴² Donald J. Harreld, 'Atlantic Sugar and the Antwerp Market in the Sixteenth Century,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 7 (2003): 155–168.

⁴³ A. Thijs, 'De geschiedenis van de suickernijverheid te Antwerpen (16de–19de eeuw): een terreinverkenning,' *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 62 (1979): 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

After Nuremberg, Frankfurt was the most important destination for Antwerp sugar exports to Germany. But while sugar exports to Nuremberg accounted for only 3% of all goods sent there from Antwerp, sugar exports to Frankfurt came to 6% of all shipments. The great firms and factors had a weaker hold on sugar exports to Frankfurt than they did for Nuremberg. The largest sugar exporter to Frankfurt, George Venant, sent 966 £ Fl. of sugar there, of which 353 £ Fl. was sugar from São Tomé. Dierick de Beste, the German born Antwerp citizen from “Nyerstadt in der Mark” (likely Neustadt in the Brandenburg Mark)⁴⁵ and a sugar baker, was the second largest sugar exporter to Frankfurt, sending 842 £ Fl. worth of sugar to the city.

The Leipzig merchant and factor, Wolf Reitweiser exported the most sugar from Antwerp to Augsburg, but others like Sebastian Neidhart and Hans Rucker were also important sugar merchants for the Augsburg market, although sugar exports amounted to only 4% of total exports. Sugar exports to Leipzig were even less significant accounting for only 1% of the total of all exports from Antwerp.

Of the 1380 instances of sugar being shipped to German lands during the thirty-month period of the tax between 1543–1545 it is possible to determine the price per Antwerp pound of sugar in just 506 of these instances with a reasonable degree of accuracy.⁴⁶ The majority of the shipments in which sugar forms a part list only the total value of all goods; the values for the individual goods are not itemized. In the 506 shipments, however, the price can be calculated; the tax register entries for these list the weight of the sugar in Antwerp pounds and include the total value of the sugar as well. On average, the price of São Tomé sugar over this two and a half year period hovered around 4 gr. Fl., with a slight decrease in the average price during 1544 and early in 1545. It is interesting to note that although the average prices for sugar from São Tomé tended to decrease slightly over this period, the range of prices fluctuated wildly. For instance in July 1545 the price ranged from a low of just over 2 gr. Fl. to a high of nearly 7 gr. Fl. While one might suspect a merchant of deflating the reported price of the sugar in order to lessen the tax bur-

⁴⁵ Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 343. See also the entries for his brothers Willem and Jakob who appear in the Antwerp Poortersboeken where their place of origin is listed as “Nieuwstadt in Mark.” SAA, Poortersboeken, 1538 and 1544.

⁴⁶ For a more complete treatment of sugar prices derived from the Hundredth Penny Tax register see Donald J. Harrell, ‘Antwerp Sugar Prices from the Hundredth Penny Tax Records (1543–45),’ *The Journal of European Economic History* 33 (2002): 611–617.

den (the tax, of course, would have been passed on to the consumer), the fact that Gasparo Ducci was a merchant himself and likely well aware of the usual prices of various goods suggests that widespread underreporting would have been a remote possibility.

The prices for other types of sugar on the Antwerp market are rather more difficult to present with any degree of accuracy, particularly over time. The sugar of the Canaries fetched a much higher price in Antwerp, averaging 7.5 gr. Fl. over the entire two and a half year period, but the prices could only be calculated for 15 months of this thirty month period. Brown sugar (*sucre candi*) averaged 6 gr. Fl. for this period.

Other Products

German merchants as well as Antwerp merchants sent a variety of other products to Germany during this period. Exotic foodstuffs, such as raisins, capers, olives, figs, etc. must have found ready markets in Germany as merchants sent at least some of these products to each of the major German destinations under discussion. Small-scale merchants sent things like hats, pelts, leather, feathers, gloves, cement, card games, and the like, to most every German city as well.

Some merchants also sent dyestuffs to markets such as Frankfurt and Nuremberg. But dyestuffs such as alum and garance (madder root) went more often than not to Cologne, likely for use in Cologne's textile industry. These two products were not particularly costly compared to some other products (such as the finished cloth itself), but were essential in the textile dying industry, and they were regularly shipped between Antwerp and Germany. Since so many other South German cities had substantial textile industries, it is likely that at least some of the dyestuffs sent to Cologne were eventually sent farther south to cities like Ulm and Augsburg which were the main production centers for fustians.

Antwerp became well-known during the sixteenth century for its book trade. By the 1540s, Antwerp could claim sixty-eight out of the 135 printers active in the Low Countries, and these printers may have produced well over half of all the books printed in the area.⁴⁷ Although there were some immigrant printers from the Rhineland who had

⁴⁷ Leon Voet, *De Gouden Eeuw van Antwerpen: Bloei en uitstraling van de Metropool in de zestiende eeuw*, (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1973), 395.

set up shops in Antwerp in the first half of the century, it was probably the presence of a small but active Lutheran cell together with large numbers of German merchants that made Antwerp's presses so important for the German market.⁴⁸ Frankfurt was the principal destination for the products of Antwerp's printing industry. Frankfurt had an important book fair, and although Antwerp's position at that fair would increase dramatically after the establishment of the Christophe Plantin's *Officina Plantiniana* after 1550, even in the first half of the sixteenth century, Antwerp's cultural output was very much in demand in Germany.

Plantin's press was probably the best known of the many printing concerns in *Golden-Age* Antwerp. The Plantin press was a regular fixture at the Frankfurt fairs. Plantin sold to booksellers from all over Europe including a number of Augsburgers; Thobias Lutz purchased books from the *Officina* at most every book fair from 1586–1593, and Sebasatian Rosenblat purchased books at the fairs of 1580–82 and 1585. Other frequent customers of the *Officina* included Zacheus Kesner of “Posen in Polonia” and P. Valgrisius of Leipzig.⁴⁹ Despite the fact that Germans formed the customer base of so many of the Antwerp printers, the individuals involved in exporting these products to Frankfurt were almost exclusively Antwerpeners rather than German merchants.

North German Trade Relations

Trade with northern Germany continued to be a mainstay of the economy of Antwerp and the southern Netherlands during the sixteenth century, due not only to the transshipment of foreign goods, but also because northern German markets were significant outlets for many products of the southern Netherlands that were less in demand in southern Germany: the cloths of the Low Countries, dairy products, fish, leathers and hides, books and artworks, as well as a much wider range of miscellaneous dry goods such as candles, shoes, paper, and and other small items.

⁴⁸ Werner Waterschoot, ‘Antwerp: books, publishing and cultural production before 1585,’ in *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp Amsterdam, and London*, edited by Patrick O’Brien, et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 234–235.

⁴⁹ Plantin Moretus Archives, A-43(1), *Grand Livre de Franckfort*, 5–26.

The export trade between Antwerp and northern Germany during the sixteenth century was characterized by shipments of a large number of individual items (by many merchants) which had a relatively low total value. The character of this trade contrasts sharply with the case of southern Germany. Merchants shipped comparatively fewer individual items with much higher values from Antwerp to the south. Because of its volume and focus on Netherlandish products, however, the trade with northern Germany remained a viable and important segment of the Antwerp-German trade.

Unlike its place in the fifteenth century, Cologne's role in the trade between Antwerp and Germany during the sixteenth century may have been more as a transshipment center (a way in which Antwerp's trade has often been characterized) rather than as a terminus for the major trade goods. Putting aside the merchandise from South German origin funneled through Cologne, it would seem the city's exports to Antwerp were made up mostly of wine and foodstuffs, just as they had been in the fifteenth century. In 1543, for instance, Antwerp tax records indicate that 619,124 liters of Rhine wine were subject to an excise tax, amounting to 54% of all wine taxed.⁵⁰ Twenty years later (about 1560) as many as 10,000 barrels of Rhine wine (amounting to perhaps as much as 1,000,000 liters) may have been imported into Antwerp each year,⁵¹ much of it presumably from the area around Cologne.

In addition to Rhine wine merchants also sent things like manufactured goods and dry goods from Cologne to Antwerp. For instance, while Cologne's cloth industry does not seem to have been important for Antwerp, clothing tailored in Cologne seems to have been very popular in Antwerp. In 1544 Ludwig Schmidt of Augsburg, acting on behalf of his brother Andreas, shipped a large quantity of high quality clothing, made with English cloth, from Cologne to Antwerp.⁵² The English cloth presumably came through Antwerp before being made into clothing in Cologne.

⁵⁰ Jan Craeybeckx, *Un grand commerce d'importation: Les vins de France aux anciens Pays-Bas (XIII^e–XVI^e siècle)*, (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1958), 11.

⁵¹ W. Brulez, 'Le commerce international des Pays-Bas au XVI^e siècle,' 1207. Brulez does not indicate what the volume of 10,000 barrels is. Based on the volume averages of an Antwerp *ame* and *pipe* of wine from the 1540s and 1550s and a lot of guesswork, the volume of 10,000 barrels might have approached 1,000,000 liters.

⁵² SAA, Certificatieboek 6, 16 July 1544, f^o 96v.

Some metal was imported into Antwerp from Cologne, but Nuremberg merchants were in control of most of it. The area around Aachen, however, was an important mining region during the sixteenth century. Calamine was the principal product from the Aachen mines, and through his fortuitous marriage in 1511 to Ida Richtergeren whose father was well established in the calamine industry in Aachen, Erasmus Schetz soon controlled Aachen's entire calamine business.⁵³ The Schetz firm also controlled much of the copper from the region around Aachen. By the mid-1560s the Schetz family's entire Aachen mining business (controlled as it was from Antwerp) fell under the direction of Erasmus's youngest son, Conrad. Unfortunately, as a result of the Schetz family involvement in the government of the Low Countries under Philip II and some disruption due to religious issues, the Schetz firm went into decline by the end of the 1570s.

Despite the prominence of the Schetz firm in both Antwerp and in Aachen, there remain no records which provide any figures for the quantification of Antwerp's metal imports from Aachen. Although some few records are available in the *Certificatieboeken* for very early in the sixteenth century (i.e. 1506), the practice of obtaining a certificate on imports had waned by the second decade of the sixteenth century. One can only speculate that this trade must have been considerable based on the tremendous wealth of the Schetz family and the importance of its *Huis van Aken* in Antwerp's commercial circles.

Other products that likely made their way from northern Germany to Antwerp include linen products from Westphalia,⁵⁴ and although beef cattle probably were imported into Antwerp from the northern Netherlands towns of Amsterdam and Nijmegen, the position of Münster and Cologne as important cattle markets suggests that at least some of Antwerp's cattle imports may have been routed through Germany.⁵⁵

⁵³ Clemens Bruckner, *Zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des regierungsbezirks Aachen*, Schriften zur Rheinisch-Westfälischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte, vol. 16, (Cologne: Rheinisch-Westfälischen Wirtschaftsarchiv zu Köln, 1967), 60–61.

⁵⁴ Albert K. Hömberg, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte Westfalens*, (Münster: Mehren und Hobbeling, 1968), 89.

⁵⁵ Othmar Pickl, 'Routen, Umfang und Organisation des innereuropäischen Handels mit Schlachtvieh im 16. Jahrhundert,' in *Festschrift Hermann Wiesflecker zum sechzigsten Geburtstag*, edited by Alexander Novotny, (Graz: Historischen Instituts der Universität Graz, 1973), 146. See also Wilhelmina Gijssbers, *Kapitale Ossen: de internationale handel in slachtvee in Noordwest-Europa (1300–1750)*, (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1999), 15, 41.

The Hanseatic Trade in Sixteenth-Century Antwerp

Due to the toll standardization granted to the Hanse by Antwerp during the sixteenth century, the goods transported into the city by these merchants can be determined fairly well. Unfortunately these Hanse toll standardization records do not address the subject of volumes. Denucé has suggested that as many as 200 to 250 Hanse ships entered Antwerp each year during the early 1570s, so trade volumes must have been quite substantial.⁵⁶

Some of the products the Hanse imported into Antwerp include: bark (by the bushel), oak boards (per hundred board feet), leather (by the *fardel* or bale), lime (by the *last*), coke (by the barrel or *last*), grain (per hundred *viertel*), cow, ox, or deer horn (by the hundred), various types of wood (spruce, beech, etc.), hops (per 600 pound sack), iron, copper, and lead (by weight), metal products (nails, hammers, etc.), Prussian chests (per unit), various stones such as a millstone (per unit), grease (by the barrel), pelts (by the barrel or chest), honey (per barrel), and flax (by the vat).⁵⁷ These last three products became less and less important over the course of the sixteenth century as silk was preferred over furs, sugar replaced honey as a sweetener, and the expansion of Flemish flax cultivation drove down the demand for eastern flax.⁵⁸ The Hanse merchants had to rely more and more on the market for grain and timber in Antwerp, and even for these products Dutch shipping was beginning to displace Hanse predominance in the Baltic.

Exports to Northern Germany

Cologne was not only the most important destination for goods exported to northern Germany during the sixteenth century, it was also the second most important destination for Germany overall, next only to Nuremberg. Not surprisingly, much of this trade was in the hands of the great South German merchant firms despite the fact that

⁵⁶ J. Denucé, *La Hanse et les compagnies commerciales anversoises aux pays baltiques*, xx.

⁵⁷ SAA, Privilegiekamer 1062. Oosterlingen. Tractaten. *Register gecoppieerd einde XVIde eeuw uit zeeckeren boeck in rooden leere gebonden berustende onder den secretaris van den hanse in 't Oostershuys*. (1567), 25v–40.

⁵⁸ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 120.

far more merchants were involved in the Cologne trade than the commerce with any other German city. Roughly 840 merchants were active in the Cologne trade compared with 129 merchants active in the more valuable Nuremberg trade. Based on the total value of all Antwerp exports to Cologne from 1543–1545 (about 165,000 £ Fl.), the average merchant shipped about 195 £ Fl. worth of merchandise to the city. The average value of exports per merchant during the same period for the Nuremberg trade was about 1472 £ Fl. Of the most important twelve merchants in the Cologne trade (together accounting for roughly 47% of all exports from Antwerp to Cologne for the 1543–1545 period), three were members of South German firms (Anton Haug, Andries Imhoff, and Bartholomeo Welser), while one, Willem van Montfort from Aachen, was an important agent for several South German firms. Virtually all of the principal South German merchants were involved to a lesser degree in Antwerp's Cologne trade.

The Cologne trade shared many characteristics with the trade between Antwerp and South German towns. Textiles accounted for a large proportion of the exports (65%). What is distinctive about Antwerp's exports to Cologne in particular, and to some degree all of the northern German destinations, is that merchants exported English kersey cloth, the sayes of the Low Countries, and Amsterdam cloth in far smaller volumes than they did for southern destinations.⁵⁹ It is likely that while production of Cologne's own lightweight and inexpensive *tirtey* cloth had gone into decline during the fifteenth century, by the end of the fifteenth century production of a newer cloth called *sartuch* made from a mixture of cotton and linen may have decreased the demand for lightweight imports from the Low

⁵⁹ This is particularly striking when one considers that Cologne's cloth imports from Antwerp totaled 108,625 £ Fl. and Nuremberg's cloth imports from Antwerp totaled 110,314 £ Fl.; a comparable amount.

Exports of Kerseys from Antwerp to:

Cologne 4809.35

Nuremberg 25059.70

Exports of Sayes from Antwerp to:

Cologne 5884.87

Nuremberg 18692.91

Exports of Amsterdam cloth from Antwerp to:

Cologne 0.00

Nuremberg 5523.40

(Source: ARA, Chambre des Comptes, 23357–23364)

Countries.⁶⁰ While spices were the second most important of Antwerp's exports to Cologne (just as was the case with the South German towns), spices accounted for only 12% of the trade. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the Cologne trade during this period was the relatively large amount of dry goods, foodstuffs, leather and hides, dyestuffs, etc. which merchants exported from Antwerp to Cologne.

Antwerp's export trade with Aachen was unlike that of any other city. In a general sense, exports from Antwerp to both northern and southern German cities were dominated by textiles, usually making up half or more of all exports. Textile exports to Aachen, while still the dominant product, accounted for barely one third of the total exports from Antwerp to that city during the 1540s. Dairy products, including butter and cheeses of various origins (mostly Flanders and Holland), accounted for 14% of all Antwerp exports to Aachen, while soap, a minor export to most German cities amounted to 6% of the exports to Aachen. Spices and sugar figured hardly at all in Antwerp's export trade to Aachen.

Antwerp's export trade with Aachen, more than any other German destination either northern or southern, was controlled by just one individual. Jan Stempel, a merchant about who little is known,⁶¹ was responsible for over 70% of all exports from Antwerp to Aachen. Even the formidable Montfort family of Aachen of whom Willem was one of the fifteen largest exporters from Antwerp to southern Germany, accounted for only 3% of the Aachen trade.⁶²

In some respects exports from Antwerp to Julich were almost as diverse as they were to Aachen. Although textiles made up 52% of Antwerp's exports to Julich, a variety of foodstuffs (principally wine),

⁶⁰ See the discussion in: Franz Irsigler, 'Industrial Production, International Trade and Public Finances in Cologne,' 269-305.

⁶¹ SAA, *Notariaat* 2071, 19 May 1542, f° 95 (also transcribed in Strieder, *Aus Antwerpen Notariatsarchiven*, 136) lists Jan Stempel as a witness to a contract between Jan Geldolf (citizen of Antwerp but originally from Aachen) and a merchant from Brittany. The contract was actually drawn up in Stempel's house in Antwerp on the Cammerstraat.

Stempel must have died sometime before May 1547 because his wife, Ema vander Bruggen, is found appointing François Vrancq as her agent in the affairs of her late husband. See SAA, *Certificatieboek* 6, 14 May 1547, f° 343v. It is unclear whether or not Stempel was born in Aachen, but in a *certificaat* dated 4 January 1513 a Jan "Stijmpel" is listed as sending goods to Aachen and is identified as a poorer of Antwerp. See Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. III, 68, no. 2599.

⁶² Willem van Montfort's father Henry and his brother Pieter were also active in exporting goods from Antwerp to Aachen.

dairy products, and leather and hides commanded a significant portion of the products sent to Julich. Of the eighty-four merchants involved in this export trade, no single merchant seems to have dominated it. While Guevel van Gulich's exports accounted for 115 £ Fl. during the 1543-45 period, Goosen van Beriden's exports amounted to barely 10 s. Fl. for the same two and a half year period; the average value of exports to Julich per merchant amounted to slightly over 23 £ Fl.

The pattern of the export trade between Antwerp and Cleves, Münster, and the region of Westphalia was remarkably similar for this period. Textile exports from Antwerp to these three destinations accounted for 51%, 56%, and 50% respectively, while exports of dry goods accounted for 33%, 36%, and 41%. The remaining export products consisted of goods typically sent to northern German destinations such as various foodstuffs, spices, dyestuffs, etc.

Despite the similarities of the composition of products exported from Antwerp to these three destinations, there were some subtle differences in the conduct of Antwerp's export trades with them. Some 475 merchants were responsible for the 18449 £ Fl. worth of exports sent from Antwerp to Cleves during this period. This amounted to an average of almost 39 £ Fl. per merchant. The twelve most important merchants accounted for about 21% of the exports from Antwerp to Cleves during the same period. Far fewer merchants were active in the Münster trade (187 merchants), but on average these merchants tended to export somewhat greater values. The average value of total exports from Antwerp to Münster per merchant was 52£ Fl. The twelve most important merchants exporting to Münster controlled 38% of this trade. One hundred merchants engaged in the export trade from Antwerp to the general region of Westphalia during this period, averaging 65 £ Fl. per merchant in exports to Westphalia. Like Münster, the twelve merchants exporting the highest values from Antwerp to Westphalia accounted for 38% of total exports.

Antwerp's export trade with Braunschweig, likely due to its distance, shared many more similarities with southern German destinations than most other northern German destinations. Textile exports accounted for 75% of all shipments sent from Antwerp to Braunschweig. By comparison it should be pointed out that Antwerp's textile exports to Leipzig accounted for 71% of the shipments to that city, and textile exports to Frankfurt accounted for 70% of that city's total. It is only because 16% of Antwerp's exports to Braunschweig

fall under the rubric of dry goods that suggests a similarity with other northern German destinations. Braunschweig also received a much less diverse range of goods from the Antwerp market than did most other northern German destinations.

The twelve most prominent merchants exporting goods from Antwerp to Braunschweig accounted for 57% of this trade. The average total value of exports per merchant amounted to about 140 £ Fl. Based on the data, Braunschweig's merchant profile is much more in keeping with a southern German model than a northern German one.

Since so many of the products exported from Antwerp to northern German destinations were the same as those sent to the south (although in differing quantities) the discussion of the various products in this section of the chapter will focus on differences in emphasis on product types common to both northern and southern Germany, and will examine goods which were sent almost exclusively from Antwerp to northern German destinations (or at least in far greater quantities making them more important for the North German trade).

Textiles

Upon examination of the various data sets in which exports from Antwerp from 1543–1545 are presented, one is immediately struck by the fact that unlike trade with the south, English cloth is not the textile export with the highest value for North German destinations. Most cloth exported from Antwerp to the north by the middle of the 1540s was not specifically identified by origin. This was a huge business in which most merchants had some stake, regardless of their other products lines. Hans van Coelen, for instance was responsible for large amounts of both English cloth and cloth of unspecified origin, but he also regularly sent leathers and skins, dyes, wine, sugar, cheese and herring from Antwerp to Cologne. Gillis vander Baren exported cloths (including English cloth) to both Cleves and Münster, but also wine and raisins. Even merchants operating on a very small scale sent some cloth to northern German destinations. Willem Clingeland exported only 10 s. Fl. worth of cloth from Antwerp to Cleves along with his modest shipments of Flemish cheese, salt, spice and dried herring.

While at least some of this unspecified cloth was likely English in origin, cloth exports specified as English were second in importance.

English kerseys, much in demand for some South German markets such as Nuremberg, were sent hardly at all to northern German destinations (with the notable exception of Cologne, but even there they only accounted for 4% of all textile coming from Antwerp). Much more common were textiles of southern Netherlands origin. In Cologne for example, satins of all types, cloths of Mechelen, Leuven, Lier, and other Netherlands towns to name only a few, were exported from Antwerp to North German cities much more frequently than to southern German towns. Fourteen merchants were involved in shipping the satins of Valenciennes from Antwerp to Cologne during this period, with Jan Ghieten exporting the greatest amount at 362 £ Fl. Ghieten was also responsible for the greatest amount of demi-ostades exported to Cologne (164 £ Fl.) by any of the twenty-one merchants involved in that trade. Only five merchants exported the cloths of Mechelen to Cologne: Rombout van Surck (about 500 £ Fl.), Anthonis van Surck (124 £ Fl.), Antoine Stoodelerre (48 £ Fl.), Henrick Hoff (465 £ Fl.), and Jan Ghieten (245 £ Fl.). With the exception of Jan Ghieten, these merchants were not particularly prominent in the trade with Germany, and all of these four merchants dealt almost exclusively in the cloth of the Low Countries.⁶³

In contrast to the demand for the cloths from Brabantine cloth producing towns, the traditional cloth of Flanders was no longer particularly important for the Cologne market. While twelve merchants exported Flemish cloth to Cologne, these exports tended to be smaller than those for other textiles. Anthonis van Surck imported the largest amount of Flemish cloth to Cologne amounting to about 80 £ Fl. Amsterdam cloth was not sent at all to Cologne, and the value other Holland cloths sent to the city came to barely more than 19 £ Fl. In the case of Cleves and Julich, cloths of Low Countries origin accounted for an amount almost equal to the English cloth exports, and in contrast to Cologne, Flemish cloth accounted for a somewhat larger share of the textile exports from Antwerp to these two towns. Nevertheless, only seven merchants sent Flemish cloth to Cleves during this

⁶³ Hoff exported a small amount of alum to Cologne otherwise the cloth of Mechelen was his only export product. Rombout and Anthonis van Surck operated independently, but both were engaged in exporting cloths of Leuven, Lier, Mechelen, cloths of unspecified origin, as well as English cloth. By far the majority of Stoodelerre's cloth exports to Cologne were not identified by origin, but he also traded in the cloths of Leuven, Mechelen, and, to a lesser degree, England.

period, with the most significant, George Iserenloon, accounting for only 86 £ Fl.

Dry Goods

In contrast to the composition of exports to South German cities, Antwerp's merchants exported large amounts of unspecified dry goods (*merceries* or *droog-goeden*) to northern German destinations. For some North German towns, particularly Cleves and Münster, dry goods made-up about 30% of all exports from Antwerp. What these dry goods may have been is unclear. In some cases they must have included miscellaneous small items (*menu merceries*), but they were more likely traditional manufactures of the southern Netherlands including textiles such as linens, tablecloths, and cloths.⁶⁴ So many merchants exported dry goods from Antwerp to Germany that it would be difficult to say that any few dominated this trade. Likewise, merchants with primary interests in leather, sugar, or dyestuffs were just as likely to include dry goods as part of their shipments as were merchants principally concerned with textile exports, and some merchants' exports were exclusively comprised of dry goods.

Fish

The fishing industry of the Low Countries was very important during the fifteenth century when most of the herring and other fishes were sent to Cologne. From Cologne some of these shipments were sent farther on. For instance, on 13 November 1488 the Antwerp fish merchant Aert Janssone forwarded 6 *lasts* and 19 barrels of dried herring to Basel via Cologne in the wagons of three transporters to two merchants of Milan who had purchased the fish.⁶⁵ The same day a merchant of Aachen sent 39 barrels of herring directly to Alsace.⁶⁶ In the fifteenth century relatively few shipments of herring made their way to southern German destinations, but there is record

⁶⁴ Filip Vermeylen, 'De Export vanuit de zuidelijke Nederlanden naar Duitsland,' 73. The likely composition of *merceries* is also discussed in L. Bril, 'De handel tussen de Nederlanden en het Iberisch schiereiland (midden XVI^e eeuw),' (unpublished thesis, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1962).

⁶⁵ Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, vol. 2, 21, no. 112.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 21, no. 113.

of herring being shipped to Nuremberg. In October 1490, a merchant of Ratingen sent two barrels of herring to Nuremberg. A year later, in November 1491, the Nuremberg merchant, Hans Hillebrant, had his Antwerp factor send four barrels of dried herring to Nuremberg. Hillebrant also sent five barrels of herring and four *stroe* of smoked herring to Nuremberg in October 1492.⁶⁷

During the period of the Hundredth Penny Tax fish was a product that was sent hardly at all to southern German destinations, but this traditional export item of the fifteenth century continued to be an important part of Antwerp's exports to both Cologne and Aachen during the sixteenth century. Roughly 1700 £ Fl. worth of fish (predominantly herring) was sent to Cologne from 1543–1545. Although this amounted to only 1% of Antwerp's exports to Cologne by value, 5% of the merchants sending goods to Cologne had a hand in the fish trade and a third of those were engaged exclusively in the export of fish.

Jan Berenbach, a merchant of Cologne who lived in Antwerp, for instance, had a lively business importing Rhine wine into Antwerp and exporting fish to Cologne.⁶⁸ During this period, he exported to Cologne twenty-three barrels containing 126,100 pieces of herring *soretz* (smoked herring) valued at 104 £ Fl. and nineteen barrels of dry herring valued at about 61 £ Fl. While large-scale merchants like Willem van Montfort may have sent more herring *soretz* than Berenbach (Montfort sent about 80 barrels holding over 430,000 pieces with a value of 175 £ Fl.), fish accounted for a negligible amount of their total exports. Gheerart Pelgrem, also a Rhine wine merchant of Cologne residing in Antwerp and sometime partner of Jan Berenbach,⁶⁹ exported fifteen barrels of dry herring valued at 119 £ Fl., sixteen barrels of herring *soretz* worth 63 £ Fl., and four *lasts* of 'white' herring valued at 40 £ Fl.

It should come as no surprise that merchants involved in the Rhine wine trade between Cologne and Antwerp would be those principally involved in sending herring from Antwerp to Cologne, given the long history of these two products in the commercial relations between the two cities. Fish exports to Aachen accounted for 2% by value of

⁶⁷ Ibid. for all of these.

⁶⁸ Jakob Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 266, 271.

⁶⁹ SAA, Certificatieboek 5, no date, f° 54, and 18 February 1542, f° 174. See also Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 278, 328.

Antwerp's exports to that city, and were in the hands of 8% of the merchants shipping goods to Aachen.

Dairy Products and Foodstuffs

Cheese exports from Antwerp to Germany during the fifteenth century went almost exclusively to Cologne, with only a few shipments destined for Aachen and Julich, and nothing at all for more southerly destinations. Based on the sketchy evidence of the *certificatieboeken*, this situation continued during the earliest years of the sixteenth century as it seems that virtually all of the dairy exports from Antwerp to Germany were sent to Cologne. By about 1512, however, merchants had begun to export more and more dairy products to destinations such as Münster, Julich, and more importantly, to Aachen. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Aachen had become a significant destination for foodstuffs.

Dairy products sent to Aachen accounted for 14% of Antwerp's exports by value to that city from 1543–1545. For Julich dairy products accounted for about 6% of the imports from Antwerp during the same period. Other North German cities also imported the cheeses of Flanders and Holland, and butter from Antwerp although in smaller quantities than Aachen and Julich. Other important foodstuffs were mostly made up of products for which Antwerp was a transshipment center, such as oil, figs, almonds, olives, oranges, etc.

The largest exporter of cheese from Antwerp to Aachen during this period was Jan Stempel. Dairy products were Stempel's fourth largest export item by value, but other merchants were much more dependent upon the trade in dairy products. While it should come as no surprise that the Antwerp merchant Gillis Casmaker ("Cheesemaker") shipped only cheese from Antwerp to Aachen, several other merchants also specialized in dairy products.

Leather and Hides

Exports to Germany of leather, pelts and raw hides were much greater to northern German destinations than they were for southern Germany. A total of 4066 £ Fl. worth of leathers, hides, and pelts were sent to Cologne, by far the most important North German destination for these goods. While it is likely that most of these leathers were products of the Low Countries, some, like the Cordovan leather of Spain, were

merely transshipped through the Antwerp market. The single largest exporter of leather products from Antwerp to Cologne by mid-century was Jan Ghieten. During this period he exported just over 650 £ Fl. worth of these goods to Cologne, comprising 2% of his total exports by value from Antwerp to Cologne. Other merchants, while exporting far less in total value, concentrated their efforts exclusively on the export of leather related goods, and the evidence suggests that for some of these merchants this may have been the family trade. For instance, a certain Jacob van Echt of Cologne sent five packs of rabbit skins from Antwerp to Cologne in March 1507.⁷⁰ Years later, in April 1545, Aernt van Echt of Cologne sent a barrel of pelts from Antwerp to Cologne.⁷¹ With the exception of a small shipment of dry fish and oil, Godschalk van Aussem and his son Jan van Aussem, both of Cologne, traded almost exclusively in pelts and hides throughout the 1540s.⁷²

* * *

It is difficult to try to establish the impact of the Antwerp trade on the sixteenth-century German economy as a whole, but it was clearly very great. The Antwerp-German trade not only offered an outlet for the metals and textiles of southern Germany, but it served to bring textiles, spices, and other high-value products to South German markets. The reliance of Nuremberg merchants, for example, on import and export activities suggests that Nuremberg's prosperity was linked to its merchants' involvement in the Antwerp market and the commercial networks emanating from it. For Augsburg merchants, trade with their home city was likely viewed as just one part of their business activities centered on Germany, because Augsburg merchants routinely traded with all South German towns and with Leipzig to a lesser extent.

One is struck at how very uniform the export trade from Antwerp to the South German towns was. The products that made Antwerp a world marketplace were sent in great numbers to each of South German merchant cities (Augsburg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Nuremberg) with very little variation. For example, in the case of trade with

⁷⁰ Doehaerd, *Études anversoises*, 232, no. 1610.

⁷¹ ARA, Chambre des Comptes 23363, 28 April 1545, f^o 153.

⁷² SAA, Certificatieboek 5, 14 and 19 February 1542, f^o 111ff. and also, ARA, Chambre des Comptes, 23357–23364.

Frankfurt and Nuremberg, spices and sugar were the second and third most important export products respectively. The second most important export product to Augsburg, however, was wool. Regardless of the relative rank of the various products going to each city, Antwerp's export trade with southern Germany was distinct from the trade with the northern German towns. Furthermore, just a few large-scale merchant firms and their factors, who had a particular need to repatriate profits from the German goods they sold at the Antwerp market, dominated the export trade with South German towns. Small-scale merchants, who were unable to compete in the trade in things like English cloth, pepper, etc., sent a wide variety of goods from Antwerp to Germany that the large-scale merchants largely ignored.

On another level, one of the most interesting aspects of Antwerp's trade with southern German towns was the role they played as centers for trade with towns farther south and east. Through the Leipzig markets, for instance, products of the southern Netherlands, English textiles, and spices were distributed through Breslau to eastern Europe. The role played by each of the most important destinations for Antwerp's exports is striking. While Leipzig was the funnel through which the goods going out of the new international entrepôt in Antwerp found their way to the east, it was from Frankfurt that these same goods were distributed to the south and western European inland cities. The intricate commercial networks that merchants created all over Europe can be pieced together through an examination of the value and volume of the products sent to German towns.

Nuremberg and Augsburg were not by and large transshipment centers, but they were by no means the end of the line for all of the goods coming out of Antwerp. While one can presume that many of the products merchants sent there were, indeed, sold in the markets of these cities, many were likely purchased by local and regional merchants for sale in towns not too distant from Augsburg and Nuremberg. Many of the goods were also destined for places much farther away, with Nuremberg or Augsburg serving as stop-over points on the way to the cities of Italy.

The trade between Antwerp and northern Germany while sharing some characteristics with the South German trade was very different in many respects. Not only were the goods merchants traded often very different, but the character of the merchants involved in the North German trade was also very different from those oriented toward the south. The products merchants sent from Antwerp to northern

German towns included the kinds of things that made Antwerp the great marketplace of the sixteenth century, particularly English cloth and cloths of the Low Countries. While these products were the mainstay of Antwerp's export trade with southern Germany as well, goods of the southern Netherlands were more important for the northern German markets than they were for more southerly destinations. Many more merchants were active in the trade with northern Germany than were active in the trade with southern Germany, and as a group the operations of merchants trading in these northern German towns were much smaller in scale than those of merchants who exported goods to Nuremberg, Augsburg, Leipzig, or even Frankfurt. Many more merchants oriented toward northern German towns tended to trade only with one town, or two towns in rough proximity (i.e. Cleves and Julich), and usually in just one or two products.

Antwerp's Cologne trade, at first blush, seems to compare more appropriately with the South German towns given the tremendous value of Antwerp's exports there. But upon closer inspection, one can see some notable differences that make it much more akin to Antwerp's trade with other, smaller, North German trading partners: the large number of individual merchants, the diversity in export goods (despite the preponderance of textiles), and the more localized nature of the trade. Despite these general observations, Cologne played an important role for the South German merchants as both a long-time trading partner with Antwerp and as an intermediate point for goods both coming from southern and eastern markets and for exports destined farther south and east. Indeed, it is quite possible that Cologne's merchants were so entrenched in the distribution of goods to Cologne's established trade network with its hinterland that far fewer merchants were willing to by-pass the city's markets.

There are two perspectives from which one could consider the conduct of trade between Antwerp and her German trading partners. One is to distinguish product types between northern (Cologne, Cleves, Julich, etc.) and southern (Frankfurt, Augsburg, Nuremberg, Strasbourg, etc) destinations. Another would be to look at the function of the various German destinations from the point of view of the greater European trading networks. In some sense one could think of the great market towns of Cologne, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, and Leipzig as principal nodes on a continental trading network, each feeding the area around them. Cologne's market handled the trade with northwestern German lands, Frankfurt served the southwest,

Nuremburg the south and southeast, and Leipzig was the jumping-off point to eastern Europe. The role of Antwerp in the sixteenth century emerges clearly in this context as the gateway between continental trade networks and the wider-world trade network of the early modern period.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GERMAN ACTIVITIES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND THE DECLINE OF THE ANTWERP MARKET

While the first half of the sixteenth century was a period of tremendous growth for the Antwerp market, the second half of the century ushered in troubled times for the Low Countries leading eventually to the Revolt of the Netherlands and the end of Antwerp's prominence in world trade. The previous chapter traced an expansion of commerce which reached its high point in the 1540s, precisely the period for which data is fortuitously preserved in the Hundredth Penny Tax records, but data of such quality does not exist in relation to Antwerp's trade with southern Germany for a later period. Nevertheless, because other types of sources point to a decline in the overland trade to southern Germany by the 1570s, and a revival of trade with northern Germany and the Baltic, and a renewed presence of Hanseatic merchants (at least until 1572) in Antwerp, the traditional view of Antwerp's economy after about 1550 suggests that South German merchants, while still an active part of the Antwerp market, shifted their activities away from trade, focusing instead on financial and speculative transactions. Warfare and a shift in continental trade patterns certainly led to the end of the Antwerp market by the early 1580s.

Although one could look at events in Antwerp itself to explain some of the reasons for a decline in its economic position, Antwerp was a global marketplace so the activities of the foreign merchant communities and events outside of Antwerp that affected their businesses are also important to consider. This chapter will examine these issues, particularly as they relate to Antwerp's South German merchant community, in order to understand the reasons for the decline of the Antwerp market as a focus of German commercial interest.

German Speculative Activities and the Antwerp Financial Markets

To say definitively that the carrying trade between Antwerp and southern Germany decreased during the 1550s and 1560s is a bit of a

stretch. Nevertheless virtually all historians seem to agree that by the second half of the sixteenth century, the German merchant community in Antwerp had shifted the focus of its activities from commerce to finance. This general agreement may be due to a paucity of documentary evidence for continued and robust German involvement in trade, and an increase in incidents of Germans appearing in financial records later in the sixteenth century. Records directly concerning trade with South German towns, such as those found in the Hundredth Penny Tax registers, do not exist for this later period. One must also bear in mind that the period when Antwerp underwent its greatest growth in building projects occurred after 1542, resulting in an increase in funding through the use of financial instruments backed by the revenues of the city such as the *rente*.¹ It was not until after this point that the *renten kamers*² opened making this type of speculative venture possible. It was only after 1542, therefore, that the city offered the South German merchants new opportunities to invest in so many financial instruments.

Commercial financial transactions, most importantly short term loans, deposits on account, exchange transactions and the like, were a necessary part of the conduct of trade in the sixteenth century, and virtually all of the foreign merchants in Antwerp regularly made these types of financial transactions. Merchants also engaged in a variety of activities that were much more speculative in nature.³ Chief among these were investments in public finance—loans to both the central state and the city, often in the form of *renten*—and real estate. In many respects these two arenas (public finance and real estate speculation) were very much intertwined in a rapidly expanding city like Antwerp.

Because of the attack on the city by Maarten van Rossem in 1542, the city magistrates decided to erect new, more modern, fortifications. To finance this great construction project the city sold *renten* to investors. Unlike short-term loans which had much higher rates of return, and involved much higher amounts of capital, smaller-scale investors were often attracted to *renten*. While the largest German

¹ A form of long-term debt whereby the investor put-up a certain amount of capital in exchange for a perpetual fixed payment derived from the income of the city, with little expectation that the principal would be repaid.

² The *Renten Kamers* were essentially municipal bond markets of which there were several in Antwerp depending on what the funds were being raised for: fortifications, brewery, etc.

³ W. Brulez, 'De Handel' in *Antwerpen in de XVIde Eeuw*, edited by Walter Couvreur, (Antwerp: Mercurius, 1975), 132.

investors in Antwerp *renten* were nobles from northern Germany, merchants formed a considerable number of these investors.

Largely as a result of the religious and political turmoil of the decade between 1566 and 1577, Antwerp's *Rekenkamer* soon owed more than it could repay. In an attempt to remedy this situation the city opened the *Reductiekas* in 1575 in order to raise enough money to cover at least the interest due on its obligations.⁴ Selling bonds to raise the capital necessary to pay the interest owed on other bonds, the proverbial borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, was not something many seasoned merchants would have seen as a profitable venture. Few German merchants invested in *Reductiekas* instruments.

German investment was particularly important in financing Antwerp's infrastructure. Because German merchants were a bit cautious of some of the city's bonds, much of the needed investment came from the German nobility. A significant number of Germans made loans to the city's *Fortificatiekas*, which had reached a total debt balance of 1,168,313 £ Fl. by 1551. While the majority of this balance was in *renten* purchased by the nobility, South German merchants preferred a more secure investment. They financed the entire amount of outright loans to the city as short-term debt or *leningen* (156,384 £ Fl.).⁵ Investment in speculative real estate ventures was of great benefit to Antwerp's commercial sector. Gilbert van Schoonbeke, one of Antwerp's prominent urban developers (as was Gaspar Schetz, son of Erasmus Schetz), made a commercial or industrial place the centerpiece of his development projects: the *Tapissierspand* or the *Vrijdagmarkt* for instance.

Of course the *Fortificatiekas* was not the only alternative available for investment. While members of North German noble families were heavy investors in Antwerp's *Fortificatiekas* (various members of the Rantzau family, for instance, invested well over 200,000 £ Fl. in the *Fortificatiekas* during the mid-1560s and Duke Adolf of Holstein invested

⁴ Marie Juliette Marinus, ed., *Archief van de Chambre des Comptes, 1342–1794. Inventaris*, (Antwerp: Stadsarchief Antwerpen, 1998), 32. The city essentially issued bonds in order to raise the money required to pay its obligations due as a result of other bond issues.

⁵ Hugo Soly, *Urbanisme en Kapitalisme te Antwerpen in de 16de Eeuw: De stedenbouwkundige en industriële ondernemingen van Gilbert van Schoonbeke*, Historische Uitgaven Pro Civitate, no. 47, (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet van België, 1977) 223 n. 89. The south German merchant firms making these loans were Ulrick Link and Anton Haug, Lazarus Tucher, the Fuggers, Wolf Puschinger, Bartholomeo Welser, and Adrian Imhof.

Loans held an advantage over *renten* in that the principal had to be paid back along with the interest.

some 37,000 £ Fl. at the same time), South German merchants were less likely to purchase *renten* from the *Fortificatiekas*, apparently preferring to buy *renten* from other arms of the city treasury or to invest in other ways. Christoffel Welser and Cie. of Augsburg was the one notable exception. He had a *rente* from the *Fortificatiekas* of over 38,000 £ Fl. in the mid-1560s.⁶ Most Germans invested with Antwerp's *Rentmeesters Camer*, in the Alum Contract, in *rentes* to pay for the construction of the Brewery complex in the *Nieuwstad*, in the Lottery, and with the *Landsknechte* among others possibilities.

Of all the forms of Habsburg state finance that caused consternation, the scheme to create an alum monopoly was probably the most controversial. Alum was a necessary product in textile production as a fixative for dyes. With textile production at the very heart of the economy of the Low Countries, a steady and reliable flow of alum was crucial. The necessity of alum for the Netherlandish textile industry did not escape the notice of the central government as a potential source of revenue to ease the financial burdens of the Habsburg war machine.

Mary of Hungary granted the first monopoly for alum to Gasparo Ducci (the same who received the right to collect the Hundredth Penny Tax in exchange for an up-front payment), who was to pay-off some of the Habsburg debt in Antwerp's financial markets. All alum imported into Antwerp was to be sold to him at a fixed price of 60 s. Fl. Ducci had the right to sell the alum for export at the price of 80 s. Fl.⁷ Ducci arranged to pay the Habsburg debt thanks to investments from Sebastian Neidhart, Jeronimus Seiler, and Alexis Grimmel, all merchants from Augsburg. In the end Ducci was only able to control the monopoly from 1544–1549 (only half of the ten-year term of his grant) as a result of charges of impropriety leveled against him by other Italian merchants with alum interests. The Germans lost a fair amount as a result of their involvement with Ducci in this venture.⁸

Since most of the alum coming into the Low Countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth century came from Italy it is no surprise that

⁶ SAA, Tresorij—1293, *Vreemde Crediteuren*, “3e Quohier inhouden de staten vande jaeren LXIII, LXV, LXVII, ende LXVIII,” 9 July 1604.

⁷ Hugo Soly, ‘De Aluinhandel in de Nederlanden in de 16^e Eeuw,’ *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 52 (1974): 811–815.

⁸ SA, *Handelsakten der Familien Neidhart, Seiler, Grimmel, und Pflaum (1547–1554)*, loose pages, February, 1549.

Italian merchants dominated its trade throughout most of that period.⁹ After the Ducci affair Genoese merchants supplied Antwerp with most of its alum, particularly those to whom the Pope granted rights for alum coming out of Tolfa. The Habsburg government, however, decided that instead of granting a private monopoly, it would contract with the Genoese merchants, first the Grimaldi and later the Sauli, to supply alum to Antwerp at a fixed price. Some of this price would be directed to government coffers. This trickle of funds, however, did not satisfy Charles V's need for funds. By 1555, the government had transferred the alum contract to the city of Antwerp in exchange for an up-front payment.¹⁰ The *renten* offered by the city financed the whole affair.

Funding schemes like the alum contract and the other *renten* obligations soon had the city in hot water. By 1572 the city's past due debt owed to Germans was huge, totaling 1,896,164 £ Artois (with North German nobility making up the lion's share of these investors). The city renegotiated the debt obligations to Germans, which increased the total due by 1578 to 2,306,530 £ Artois.¹¹ For the most part, South German merchants were not as exposed to substantial potential loss as the North German nobility was in the event of default by the city. Antwerp owed Anton Fugger and Christoffel Welser each only 7945 £ Artois in past due debt in 1572, and Hans Paulus Herwart and Andreas Imhoff each only 6620 £ Artois. The city also owed Christoffel Welser and Cie. 47,763 £ Artois by 1572, making the Welser firm the most heavily exposed of the South Germans to potential problems in Antwerp public finance. The obligations to South Germans paled in comparison to the amounts owed to North German nobility. Antwerp owed Duke Adolf of Holstein over 118,229 £ Artois by 1572, and the various members of the Rantzau family held notes totaling just short of 300,000 £ Artois. German women, mostly members of the nobility, also invested heavily in Antwerp public finance. Of the eighty-eight Germans listed in the outstanding obligations for 1578 twelve were women, including Ursula, Duchess of Magdeberg.¹²

⁹ Jean Delumeau, *L'Alun de Rome, XV^e–XIX^e siècle*, (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1962), 219–225.

¹⁰ Hugo Soly, 'De Aluinhandel in de Nederlanden in de 16^e Eeuw,' 821.

¹¹ SAA, Tresorij—1276, (loose sheets), "Staet vande geloste ende gecasseerde obligatien anno 71 ende 72," n.d. and "Staet vande geappointeerde crediteuren al anno 78 vervallen," n.d.

¹² SAA, Tresorij, T-1276, *Staet vande geppoinmteerde crediteuren al anno '78 vervallen*. No date.

South German merchants occasionally invested as a group. The firm of Anton Fugger and Nephews organized a loan of 20,000 *Gulden* which was to come due in August 1574.¹³ Twenty-four South Germans participated in funding this loan including: the Welsers, Hans Putz, Jeronimus Rehlinger, the Imhoffs, Hans Paulus Herwart, and Daniel Hochstetter among others. The two large transport firms of George Leder and Hans Cleynhans (the German transport firms most active in transport to Italy) were also involved in this investment.

The city had sufficiently over-extended itself that by the time *rente* payments came due in the early 1570s the city was in default. The many Germans who had invested in Antwerp's *Fortificatiekas* encountered a great deal of difficulty collecting on their investments. While the States of Brabant paid the debt that Antwerp owed to Anton Fugger and Christoffel Welser (individually, not the firm) in 1575, the Welser family persisted for over twenty years in trying to collect on the larger debt owed to the firm as a result of the investment in the *Fortificatiekas*.¹⁴ Hans Paulus Herwart also persisted in trying to collect the city's obligations to him. What started as a fairly modest debt in 1573 (8,000 *Carolusgulden*) became quite substantial fourteen to sixteen years later with the accrual of the yearly interest rate of 8.3%. The interest on his debt of 8,000 *Carolusgulden* was 10,339.

To be sure, Antwerp municipal finance was not the only option for investment open to South German merchants doing business at the Antwerp Bourse. Some Germans, most particularly the Fuggers, made substantial loans to the government in Brussels. Even the Four Members of Flanders owed money to the South Germans.¹⁵ The South German merchant, Hans Putz, lent 42,000 *Rheinish guilders* to the Four Members of Flanders to help finance the dyke at the Borderweert polder.¹⁶ While these loans were risky, as long as the economy remained strong, the merchant was likely to receive interest payments from the issuer. Unfortunately, by the 1570s Antwerp's troubles became severe enough that all too often the city defaulted

¹³ SAA, Tresorij, T-1280, 2 April 1576.

¹⁴ SAA, Tresorij 1279, *Welser Letter*, 2 July 1596. In this letter, written in 1596, to the city of Antwerp, Marx Matheus Welser and Cie. attempted to collect the debt originally owed to Christoffel Welser and Cie. or "bringeren des brieffs" which had not been paid when it came due in 1578 according to the terms of the renegotiation of 1572. The amount of the claim was 55,788 £ Artois.

¹⁵ The four members of Flanders consisted of Ghent, Ieper, Bruges, and the Franc de Bruges.

¹⁶ SAA, Tresorij—1276, loose pages, 24 November 1608.

on its obligations and many German investors were required to invest considerable effort in collecting their debts.

Germans had been purchasing real estate in Antwerp for some time, usually to house their branch offices and to store their goods, but many of the larger firms were also interested in real estate (even polder land outside the city) as an investment. German merchant firms purchased lots in the *Nieuwstad*, the area of the city's expansion to the north of Antwerp proper, and the area of urban renewal near the *Keizerport* (called the *Schuttershoven*) on the southwest end of the city.¹⁷ The Anton Fugger firm obtained lot number 66 located "northward in the middle street," and lot number 121 "westward in the *Schuttershoven*." Wolf Puschingier acquired lot number 114 "westward in the *Schuttershoven*." Some other Germans also had lots in this vicinity: Christoffel Welser (lots 116 and 118), Hans Ort (lot 134), and Jan Studelinck together with Jan van Campen (lot 120). Other Germans obtained lots "northward on the second canal" in the *Nieuwstad*: Christoffel Welser (lot 53), and Jacob Herbroet (lot 55). Mattheus Ortel exchanged lot number 2 "northward on the middle canal" in consideration of two houses on the *Huidvettersstraat*.¹⁸

The Decline of the Antwerp Market and the Trade with Germany

Despite the tendency to look upon the decades after the 1540s as a period of decline for Antwerp trade in favor of financial transactions, it would seem that for the early 1550s, at least, trade with southern Germany continued at a fairly steady level. Based on the tables from the two percent export tax of 1553¹⁹ presented in Goris's book on Iberian and Italian merchants in Antwerp during the sixteenth century, about 20,000 pieces of South German fustian were exported from Antwerp to the Iberian Peninsula during 1553.²⁰ These fustian exports from Antwerp to Iberia represent only a portion of all the fustians sent into Antwerp. As we have seen for the 1540s, Germans

¹⁷ The following list is from SAA, Statsprotocollen (Versameling), 161–176 for the period between 5 July 1561 and 17 July 1561.

¹⁸ Mattheus Ortel was one of the Antwerp factors of the Anton Fugger firm. See SAA, Certificatieboek 15, 18 May 1558, f° 513.

¹⁹ This tax did not concern trade with German destinations. The tax was levied on sea-borne trade going to Iberian ports.

²⁰ Jan-Albert Goris, *Études sur les Colonies Marchandes Méridionales*, 297.

also sent fustians to England, and likely to other European destinations, as well as selling them at Antwerp for local consumption.

Even though the 1553 tax registers do not identify the origin of most of the items listed in it, many of the manufactured goods and metals enumerated in the records of the 1553 tax likely originated in German towns. Indeed, the over 325 hundredweight of copper *manilles* sent to Iberia during the same year certainly originated in German mines.²¹

Herman van der Wee, in his classic study on the Antwerp market, suggested the 1550s as the period in which the "German continental economy" began to decay, citing a downturn in textile production in the Low Countries, an agricultural crisis in the mid-1550s, and finally, an increase in South German bankruptcies. The losses incurred by many South German bankers were due to the bankruptcy of Phillip II of 1557, and the subsequent bankruptcy of both the French and Portuguese crowns by 1560.²² Van der Wee suggested that a decrease in trade with southern Germany is reflected in this more general down-turn and can be seen in a decrease in revenues of the Brabant Land toll during this period and after.²³

A newer study, while it does indicate a short-term decline in revenues of the land toll during the first years of the 1550s, (and again during the middle years of the 1560s) indicates a rebound to the levels of the 1540s by the end of the 1550s.²⁴ Indeed, revenues of the Brabant Land toll (the toll collected on the principal overland trade route to Cologne) did not fall off completely until about 1577 (following the Spanish Fury), and it was not until after this point that traffic on the 'Cologne highway' dropped off to a trickle. The problem with extrapolating trade volumes between Antwerp and Germany from these toll records is twofold. First, Nuremberg merchants as well as merchants from Aachen were exempt from the land toll. The cessation of trade between Antwerp and Nuremberg would be difficult to see in toll records, but if trade with Nuremberg stopped completely it would have had much larger repercussions. Second, it is difficult to determine whether goods were ultimately destined for southern German or northern German towns from the records of the Brabant

²¹ Ibid., 296.

²² Jan Materné, 'Schoon ende Bequaem tot versamelinghe der coopliden,' 82–83.

²³ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 218.

²⁴ Filip Vermeulen, 'In de ban van Antwerpen,' 232.

land toll, since goods going to both destinations used the same trade route from Antwerp to at least Cologne.

Looking at aggregate totals collected in Antwerp for fees paid at weigh scales, and for all tolls, both land and water, shows the overall health of the Antwerp export economy. The years 1553–1557 actually show greater revenues than the early 1540s.²⁵ Looking at the data from the Brabant land toll coupled with the figures of total toll and scale revenues, it is clear that Antwerp's export trade continued at roughly the same levels throughout the 1540s, 1550s, and 1560s, falling-off only after 1577. Brulez has remarked that this period of the 1540s through about 1575 was one of successive highs and lows in overland trade rather than a period of stagnation.²⁶

Scholars disagree about the point in time at which to mark the end of the Antwerp market. Virtually all historians would agree with 1585, the year the Scheldt river was blockaded by the Dutch (thus closing Antwerp's access to the sea), as the point in time when Antwerp ceased to be an important international market. In some respects the problem is not so much when the final death knell sounded for Antwerp's trade, but at what point the Antwerp economy really began to decay. While some foreign merchants remained in Antwerp after 1585 to protect their investments, most had left the city by then. The fall of the Antwerp market was marked by a procession of events which led to an overall instability in the marketplace. The main external factors that contributed to the decline of Antwerp as a commercial center were religious upheaval and the Revolt of the Netherlands.

Despite ancillary evidence for continued trade after the mid-1550s, contemporaries were quite concerned about the adverse effects the religious and political events of 1566–67 were having on commerce. G.D. Ramsay, in his history of the English Merchant Adventurers in Antwerp, suggests that the events surrounding the iconoclastic riots of 1566 were a pivotal period, at least as far as the English merchants were concerned. Through an examination of letters Ramsay paints a dark picture of Antwerp in 1566–1568 in which merchants fled the city in huge numbers and commerce went into serious decline.²⁷

²⁵ SAA, *Tresorij 818, Tollen, 15th–18th Centuries*. Extracts from the city accountbooks.

²⁶ W. Brulez, 'De Handel,' 118. "Het is echter eerder een periode van opeenvolgende hoogten en laagten dan een van stagnatie."

²⁷ G.D. Ramsay, *The Queen's Merchants and the Revolt of the Netherlands*.

The problems of 1566 were certainly not lost on Antwerp's city council which said that the Protestant preaching,

... inhibit[s] trade (which is, nevertheless, the principal foundation on which this city's wealth rests) and intends to inhibit even more trade since many of the merchants, foreign and other, are leaving the city because of the fear for the inconveniences which could arise from these gatherings and novelties and practices which they expect to encounter here.²⁸

While trade with Germany may not have declined to an extent that warranted such great doom-saying, for the city council and the Antwerp merchant elite a crash at the Antwerp Bourse would have been much more disastrous than a downturn in the German trade. Eventually, Calvinist preaching was forbidden in the city by 1567 and restrictions continued until 1577. Those Calvinists who remained in Antwerp were driven underground.²⁹

The Hanseatic merchants refused to trade in Antwerp after the Spanish Fury of 1576 and the devastation it brought to Antwerp. While there was some small revival of sea-borne trade during the period of the Calvinist regime in Antwerp between 1577 and 1585, overland trade had come to a complete standstill due to disruption caused by the Revolt of the Netherlands. The Fuggers and Welsers again participated in the pepper monopoly contract in 1579, but by about 1582 Antwerp was once again under siege and could no longer support commercial activity.³⁰ The Fuggers had been keeping a close eye on developments in Antwerp, but it seems that they may have given up the city after 1584. The Fugger newsletter dated 30 June 1584, expressed concern over the embargo by the Dutch:

Warships are being kept at sea to stop supplies to the English and likewise to those coming from Lisbon, Spain and France. Three ships have been intercepted, two English laden with wheat, one from Spain with molasses. If the Embargo is strictly kept, it will cause want and distress in many ways.³¹

²⁸ From the "Admonitie" of 17 July 1566 translated and quoted in: An Kint, 'The Community of Commerce,' 252.

²⁹ Guido Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis, 1550-1577*, translated by J.C. Grayson, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 133-134.

³⁰ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 257.

³¹ Victor von Klarwill, ed., *The Fugger News-Letters*, translated L.S.R. Byrne, vol. 2, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1926), 84.

By 1585 Antwerp was in such a state that the magistrates had to declare bankruptcy and they could no longer honor municipal obligations. Indeed, a city financial commissioner, Hans Crueser, wrote a letter dated 24 March 1584 in which he explained that due to the war and the fall of Antwerp, the city was broke and could not pay any of its creditors.³²

German merchants did not immediately discontinue all contact with Antwerp after 1585. But based on the notarial records that remain for the sixteenth century, with few exceptions, merchants concentrated their efforts on collecting their debts and settling their affairs.³³ Virtually no South Germans appear in notarial records after 1585, and those few Hanse merchants who remained were mostly interested in the disposition of the moveable property of the Hanse *Kontor* in Antwerp.³⁴ For years after the closing of the Scheldt, South Germans attempted to recoup the losses they had incurred in Antwerp. Marx Matheus Welser and Cie. wrote a letter to the treasurer of Antwerp in July of 1596 in an attempt to collect the debt the city originally owed to Christoffel Welser and Cie. or “bringeren des briefs” in 1578 in the amount of over 50,000 £.³⁵ As late as 1608 the Putz family was still trying to collect the substantial loan Hans Putz had made to the Four Members of Flanders in 1578.

With trade in Antwerp at a standstill, there was little the Germans could do besides move their operations to other towns. Around 1586 a group of German merchants petitioned the city of Amsterdam for permission to settle there with the same privileges they had enjoyed in Antwerp—although it is not certain what privileges they may have been referring to—but nothing seems to have come of it.³⁶ Nevertheless, several German firms, in particular the Welsers and the Jenisch families transferred their Antwerp offices to Amsterdam by the end of the sixteenth century.³⁷ Many other German merchants drew back

³² “dese stadt deur de lanchduerige oirlogen is gevallen. . . . hoe dese stadt over xvi jaren is overvallen geweest . . . dese stadt is gans geldeloos geworden.” see: SAA, Tresorij—1275. Loose Letter. 24 March 1585.

³³ See: Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatsarchiven*, 393–408.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 782, 398.

³⁵ SAA, Tresorij—1279, loose letter, 2 July 1596.

³⁶ Oscar Gelderblom, ‘Antwerp Merchants in Amsterdam after the Revolt, 1578–1630,’ in *International Trade in the Low Countries (14th–16th Centuries): Merchants, Organisation, Infrastructure*, edited by Peter Stabel, et al. (Leuven: Garant, 2000), 226, n. 11.

³⁷ Oscar Gelderblom, *Zuid-Nederlandse Kooplieden en de Opkomst van de Amsterdamse Stapelmarkt (1578–1630)*, (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), 121–122.

to Cologne or Frankfurt. Of course the exodus out of Antwerp was not restricted to merchants. The population of Antwerp fell from about 90,000 just before 1584 to about 55,000 by 1587, and to about 42,000 by 1589. Protestants, whether or not they were Germans, either fled to the north in the face of Spanish forces, or found refuge in Cologne.³⁸

It would be difficult to point to just one cause for the decline and fall of Antwerp as a center for world trade. It has already been shown above that some scholars prefer to look to the economic instability of the central German economy, while others look to the religious upheaval in the Low Countries, or to the closing of the Scheldt as the catalyst for the end of Antwerp's commercial prominence. It is clear from the evidence of the toll records that overland trade continued to be fairly robust for a decade after the iconoclastic problems of the 1560s, and that this trade had long subsided by the time the Dutch closed the Scheldt by 1585. It would seem that the onset of the Revolt of the Netherlands during the 1570s and the disruption to overland trade coupled with decreased confidence in the ability of the government to repay its debts that the war brought was likely the greatest factor for Antwerp's difficulties in the closing decades of the sixteenth century. While trade may have limped along after 1577 much of the activities of the Germans in the city after this point were concentrated on settling their affairs and recouping their losses.

³⁸ Fernand Donnet, *Les exilés anversois à Cologne (1582-1585)*, (Antwerp: Veuve de Backer, 1899), 17.

CHAPTER NINE

THE GERMAN CONTRIBUTION

The hundred year period between the rise of Antwerp as an international market from the last decades of the fifteenth century to the closing of the Scheldt River and access to the sea in 1585 coincided with, and likely contributed greatly to, the rise of the German continental economy. Despite the expansion of maritime based trade during the sixteenth century, fueled by Portuguese and Spanish ventures, land-based trade in Europe remained the motor of Europe's economy. Historians have understood this for some time. Portugal and Spain may have opened the world for European expansion, but the Iberian kingdoms directing their energies toward transit trades would never become magnets for Europe's economy. By the sixteenth century it would be to northwestern Europe that German merchants and even merchants from eastern Europe would increasingly orient themselves.¹

The contribution of the South Germans to the larger world economy during this period of the expansion of Europe is easily overlooked due to their continental orientation. It is important to bear in mind that the great increase in maritime trade and the importation of colonial goods does not end with their delivery to the port town. No early modern city with its hinterlands, and certainly not Antwerp despite its size, would have been able to consume such a volume of goods. In order to find sufficient markets for these products, merchants needed to distribute them well within the continent.

It is true that during the second half of the fourteenth century European merchants began to utilize seaborne trade much more often than in previous centuries, but by the end of the fifteenth century a shift had again been made to a greater emphasis on overland trade.²

¹ Kristoff Glamann, 'The Changing Patterns of Trade,' in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. 5, edited by E.E. Rich and C.H. Wilson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 205–206.

² Peter Spufford, 'Transaction costs and the changing patterns of trade in late medieval Europe.' Paper presented to the Economic History Association annual conference, Birmingham (UK), April 6, 2002.

This shift gave South German merchants a distinct advantage as they were well positioned to capitalize on the increased use of overland routes to move goods between northern and southern market towns.

The South German towns were arrayed along the Antwerp-Venice commercial axis, which probably formed the most important set of trade routes in the continent. Germans had enjoyed profitable connections at the Venetian end of this commercial corridor for years, and the opportunities at Antwerp drew merchants because so many of the most sought after goods were only available there. The routes connecting these two great commercial cities converged on the central and southern German towns of Frankfurt and Nuremberg. From Frankfurt and Nuremberg, merchants distributed goods throughout the Holy Roman Empire and to towns farther east. The South Germans, positioned as they were between the Mediterranean and the North Sea/Atlantic trading spheres, were able to benefit from the trade of both southern European merchants and northern merchants. The South Germans created a vast commercial network that linked Antwerp with the main commercial cities of central, southern, and eastern Europe.

The Hochstetter firm's trade in English wool between Antwerp and Venice, or the lively carrying trade between Antwerp and several northern Italian cities conducted by the Cleynhans and Leder transport firms are only a couple examples that have been presented in this book of trade that ran the length of this route. On the other hand, Anton Haug's trade in English cloth was directed to Nuremberg, and Erasmus Schetz sent great quantities of Portuguese pepper to Leipzig. Going in the other direction were thousands of copper *manilles*, which the Portuguese used to purchase pepper in India. So it would seem that neither seaborne nor overland trade alone could account for the dynamic economic growth of the sixteenth century; both were necessary. As van der Wee has pointed out, it was the presence in Antwerp of both a far-flung maritime trade and vibrant land-based trade that "whipped up" a capitalist boom in the first half of the sixteenth century.³

The South German presence in Antwerp during this period also coincided with an increase in monopolistic practices that had important repercussions for the economy. These forms of capitalist expression were primarily restricted to the great firms, like the Fuggers, Welsers, and Hochstetters, families that controlled several sectors of

³ Herman van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market*, 317.

the economy. But several merchants might band together to take advantage of economies of scale in order to obtain a monopoly and carve a profitable niche for themselves. Both Italians and Augsburg merchants such as Sebastian Neidhart, for example, controlled the alum contract thereby profiting from Antwerp's alum trade.⁴

Although product diversity was the rule even among the largest merchant firms, a preoccupation with trade in one or two principal products by the great firms left the trade in other goods in the hands of large numbers of smaller-scale merchants. The products important to Antwerp when it was still a regional marketplace were successfully traded in continental markets such as Cologne and Frankfurt only as long as Antwerp retained its international character. Likewise, products that had lost their allure as far as the great firms were concerned (old style Flemish luxury cloths for instance) could still be quite profitable for the smaller-scale merchants.

German participation in the social life of Antwerp was both noticeable and vibrant despite the absence of recognition as a privileged trading nation. The High Germans participated as a matter of course in highly visible events such as processions and joyous entries in which they came together as a High German Nation. This self identification as members of a trading nation allowed the Germans to function on par with the other foreign trading nations. In fact, the status of the South Germans in the city was the equal of the privileged trading nations. Their position in processions coupled with the sheer number of merchants and factors in the city insured for them a prominent place in the hierarchy of foreign groups. The South Germans were able to adapt the institutional form of the merchant guild to meet their own needs.

With so many foreign merchant groups in Antwerp, Germans in the city were able to associate with and learn from a variety of exemplary merchant organizational forms. Italian merchants adopted a fairly loose organizational structure in Antwerp. Merchants from various Italian towns (like Genoa or Lucca) may have enjoyed the privileges that the status of trading nation brought them, but they did so without the ghettoization that marked the English and Hanse nations. The English and the Hanse both required their merchants to conform to

⁴ SA, Literalien I, *Handelsakten der Familien Neidhart, Seiler, Grimmel, und Pflaum, ca. 1547–1554*, loose pages, July 27, 1560.

a strict regulation of commerce, as in the case of English restrictions on the sale of cloth until the cloth fleet had arrived in Antwerp.

When acting as a nation, the South Germans certainly had much more in common with the Italians than they did with the North German Hansards or the English as far as organization is concerned. Unlike Hanse merchants who operated almost exclusively in northern European port towns, South Germans were much more apt to venture into Italian markets, and there is little doubt that they learned much from their southern neighbors. Likewise there is ample evidence that many of the South Germans in Antwerp had commercial relationships with their Italian counterparts. The Hochstetters of Augsburg, the Ingolts of Strasbourg, and the Haug-Langenauer-Link Cie. of Augsburg, and many others enjoyed commercial connections with Venice. The German transporters, Hans Cleynhans and Mathys and George Leder, shipped goods overland between Antwerp and Italy, mostly for Italian merchants. These examples can only hint at the important connections between South German and Italian merchants. It is no wonder that South Germans tended to organize themselves after the manner of the Italians and to employ many Italian commercial techniques.

South Germans may not have formed enclaves like the English or the Hansards, but it is difficult to conclude from the available evidence whether or not Germans consciously formed their own neighborhoods in Antwerp. Based on the extreme population density in the city during most of the sixteenth century they probably were not able to locate themselves in as close proximity as they might have liked, but it is clear that there was a certain amount of clustering in German settlement. This probably became even more pronounced during the period of Antwerp's greatest growth than in earlier decades. German merchants also led social lives apart from their strictly commercial lives. Some of them became burghers and lived out their lives in Antwerp. Germans, like the foreign merchants who were organized into officially recognized nations, formed communities in both the spatial and social senses of the word.

The large number of German immigrants to the city and the participation of Germans (both from northwestern Germany and southern Germany) in the hospitality sector are indicative of an ongoing and regular intercourse between Antwerp and other German towns as well as other parts of Europe. Germans surely were able to keep in touch with news from home in the inns and taverns that catered to their needs. Even apart from the inns merchants kept in regular contact

with their counterparts in Germany. Particularly striking was the increase in postal correspondence between merchants both private and public by the end of the sixteenth century. The Fuggers received regular reports from Antwerp, and postal services between Antwerp and major cities was common.⁵ Not only did the great German merchant firms like the Fuggers need close communication between their branch offices, but even the smaller ‘commission’ merchants needed to keep up with commercial developments in disparate areas of their trading spheres. Merchant manuals abounded in the sixteenth century and newer innovations such as the regularly published price currents at Antwerp (again borrowed from the Italians) were essential for the smooth conduct of trade.⁶

As a result of the interest of Germans in Antwerp, and more importantly in the products found in Antwerp and the role the Germans played in distributing these products throughout central Europe, Germans had a key role in bringing Antwerp to the forefront of world trade in the sixteenth century. While the trade in German metals was one of the foundations of early modern Antwerp’s economy, it was more likely the part the South Germans played in distributing high value goods south and east that made them important for the European economy as a whole. It might also be said that it was the German merchants who established Antwerp as the continental entrepôt. Without the central European markets so much under the control of South Germans, the Portuguese and their spices, the English and their cloths, the Spanish and their wools, and others would have moved on to find other outlets for their precious cargoes. By 1585, without the participation of South Germans, the focus of Europe’s economy shifted away from Antwerp toward other, somewhat less cosmopolitan trade centers.

Nevertheless, Antwerp’s supremacy was tenuous for several reasons. First, because the city did not have the shipping industry like the one that developed in places like Amsterdam or some of the English port towns. Antwerp merchants were quite involved in the trade with the Baltic despite the fact that the Hanse was dominant in this sphere, but the Antwerp merchant companies trading in the Baltic depended on the shipping resources of their northern neighbors, whether Germans

⁵ See Strieder, *Aus Antwerpener Notariatesarchiven*, no. 801, 404.

⁶ John McCusker and Cora Gravensteijn, *The Beginnings of Commercial and Financial Journalism*, 21.

or Hollanders. Due to the lack of a native merchant marine in the sixteenth century, once the Hollanders and the Hansards quit the city, Antwerp's Baltic trading companies floundered. Likewise, trade with the Atlantic was firmly in the hands of the Spanish and Portuguese.

Second, the industrial base characteristic of other cities in the Low Countries, much less the type of industry that would eventually thrust London to the forefront of European commerce, was missing in the case of Antwerp. While the city had developed a textile industry (like most other Flemish and Brabantine towns) by at least the thirteenth century as mentioned above, commerce displaced industry with the success of the fairs and as a result of the attitudes of the city's elites. What industry did develop in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was oriented around finishing foreign products, and Antwerp's other industries (principally beer brewing and sugar refining) were not significant enough from an international perspective to sustain the city's economy once the transit trade had declined.

Third, the city was almost totally dependent on foreign merchants for its prosperity. With about 30% of the population of the city involved in long-distance trade or in services supporting this trade to one degree or another,⁷ any disruption would be devastating. Warfare between Habsburg and Valois was only one of many problems merchants might face. The religious disturbances of the later 1560s, not to mention the ensuing Revolt of the Netherlands, were others. The shadow that these difficulties might cast on Antwerp's prosperity was not lost on its rulers. There was no doubt that once the foreign merchants left the city, its importance as a commercial center would be substantially diminished.

The South German merchant community in Antwerp provided the necessary mechanism of product distribution throughout Europe during the sixteenth century that was the hallmark of commercial capitalism. Without these merchants and the sophisticated overland trade networks that they built it is difficult to see how Antwerp could have risen to such a place in the commercial structure of early modern Europe. With the fall of the Antwerp market in the final quarter of the sixteenth century, Europe went through a significant change, and the South German merchants were forced to find other opportunities.

⁷ J. van Roey, 'De Correlatie tussen het sociale-beroepsmilieu en de godsdienstkeuze te Antwerpen,' 242.

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APPENDIX 1

MONEY

There have been a number of excellent books written on the topic of money in the sixteenth century, so this brief essay is intended only to provide the reader with the basic information necessary to make sense of the various monies mentioned in this book.

Virtually all of the commercial transactions in Antwerp during the sixteenth century were expressed in the money of account based on the Flemish *groot*. Money of account was the currency that merchants used to express value not necessarily the actual coin used to settle these accounts. Because of its use in accounting, many scholars have proposed that the money of account was an imaginary currency. This was true to some extent. As a money of account the Flemish *groot* held a fairly steady value, while the actual coin might fluctuate.¹ The Flemish *groot* was a silver coin derived from the French *gros tournois*.² The Flemish pound consisted of 240 *groten*, usually expressed either as d. (*denier*) or simply *groot*. 12 d. equaled 1 s. (*sou* or *schelling* using the abbreviation sch.) for 20 s. to the pound (for convenience I have used the abbreviation 'Fl.' to indicate this currency in this book). A silver coin commonly used in Antwerp was the *stuiver*, which equaled 2 Flemish *groten*.

By about the year 1500 one Venetian *ducat* equaled about 75 *groten* and one Florentine florin equaled about 76 *groten*.³

Introduced in the 1520s, the *Carolusgulden* was a gold coin often used by the ruler and nobility as a money of account in the collection of taxes. The Hundredth Penny Tax was figured in *Carolusgulden*, while the value of the goods on which the tax was determined was expressed in Flemish pounds. The Flemish pound *groot* equaled 6 *Carolusgulden* during the middle years of the sixteenth century.

¹ See the chapter 'Money of Account,' in Peter Spufford, *Monetary Problems and Policies in the Burgundian Netherlands*, 13–28.

² John Day, *Money and Finance in the Age of Merchant Capitalism*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 103.

³ See the extensive tables in Peter Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, (London: The Royal Historical Society, 1986), 215–228.

The money of Brabant, also a pound of 240 *grooten*, but reckoned at a lower value than the Flemish pound, was rarely used in large commercial transactions in Antwerp, but it is found in the records from time to time. The Brabant pound equaled 4 *Carolusgulden*. The pound of Artois was most often used in public finance in Antwerp. The pound Artois seems to have been the equivalent of the pound *parisis*, but minted by the counts of Flanders rather than the French king.⁴ The other currency commonly used in Antwerp was the *Rheingulden*, also called *koerfursters*, the ‘gulden of the electors’ minted in many of the Rhineland cities. About 1500 the *Rheingulden* was valued at about 50 Flemish *groot*, or about 4 to 5 *Rheingulden* to the Flemish pound *groot*.

While the monies mentioned here constitute those most commonly mentioned, Italian, Iberian, and Imperial currencies figure in the many business contracts and fiscal records in the Antwerp sources as well.

⁴ Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange*, 167, 213–214.

APPENDIX 2

MERCHANTS WITH EXPORTS TO GERMANY OVER 1000 £ FLEMISH GROOT (1543–1545)

(Ranked by Value of Overland Exports from Antwerp, 1543–45.

Source: ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–23364)

Puschinger, Wolf	63075.13	Haze, Jan de	2611.33
Montfort, Willem van	42992.42	Surck, Geo. & Anth. van	2371.40
Schetz, Erasmus	39373.73	Lelie, Jan	2361.13
Ghieten, Jan	39035.70	Mangolt, Christoffel	2345.17
Haug, Anthonis	35519.28	Surck, Rombout van	2196.45
Imhoff, Andries & Simon	19629.96	Lutssen, Michiel	1976.05
Schmalts, Hartman	18641.30	Hoerner, Dierick	1714.42
Jenisch, Bartholomeo	16599.67	Manlich, Christoffel	1702.00
Preuser, Henrich	16316.85	Seghen, Arent van	1693.30
Rem, Lucas	15097.82	Runtvlees, Erasmus	1649.21
Putz, Hans	12082.20	Imhoff, Peter	1614.33
Reytwyser, Wolf	12004.51	Hont, Hans	1596.30
Welser, Jacob	11451.27	Colen, Jan	1586.85
Welser, Bartholomeo	11416.59	Swickaert, Matheeus	1539.50
Spiegelberch, Hans	11056.71	Ingolt, Gerge and Philip	1485.52
Paulus, Hans	10420.00	Aschelen, Simon	1453.00
Coelen, Hans van	9835.42	Lucas, Bastian	1438.00
Hoochstetter, Christoffe	19097.67	Stoodelerre, Anthoine	1423.50
Stempel, Jan	8770.79	Thomas, Pallas	1380.10
Lixhals, Andries	7581.97	Baren, Gillis vander	1374.02
Alewyne, Jan	7370.31	Raven, Dierick	1351.99
Uchen, Hubrecht van	6007.24	Laet, Balthazar	1336.96
Behault, Franchois de	5689.92	Prechter, Fredrick	1275.65
Brudegem, Simon	5329.80	Hesselt, Thielman van	1260.00
Faille, Jan della	5169.00	Sybrecht, Jacob van	1257.10
Liebmauwer, Sebastian	5157.17	Studelinck, Lodewyck	1253.42
Diefsteter, Christoffel	4979.95	Snederman, Herman	1238.42
Hane, Jan de	4966.02	Beste, Dierick de	1202.42
Smit, Andries	4786.67	Snomincq, Rombout	1196.05
Bher, Otto	4701.38	Lopez, Martin	1188.00
Neidhart, Sebastian	4439.52	Verhelt, Thiel	1184.94
Rucker, Hans	4422.62	Cleynhans, Hans	1179.67
Surck, Anthonis van	3712.00	Venant, George	1162.68
Pels, Arnoudt	3695.00	Woensdrecht, Hubrecht van	1149.42
Dortmund, Anthonis van	3525.20	Lotter, Anthonis	1144.50

Kessel, Thielman van	3375.67	Nyenlandt, Jacques van	1137.63
Horninch, Issac	3283.15	Alaert, Dierick	1134.62
Geyl, Philip	3265.31	Achtelbach, Francois	1122.44
Rehlinger, Coenradt	3265.00	Swols, Reynaert	1103.58
Schorer, George	3250.73	Jenisch, Hieronimo	1069.00
Hulsbosch, Mathys	3243.57	Reynenborch, Hans	1069.00
Gillis, Francois	3098.50	Imwinckel, Henrick	1052.59
Katere, Adriaen de	3082.79	Utrecht, Caspar van	1033.33
Boutry, Jan	2930.72	Outersy, Bernard van	1025.18
Hoot, Dierick	2785.10	Plassendonch, Jan van	1011.30
Broch, Lenart	2680.05	Beschoren, Marten	1003.03
Trantman, Hans	2625.28		

APPENDIX 3

TOTAL VALUE OF EXPORTS FROM ANTWERP TO VARIOUS GERMAN CITIES (1543–1545)

(Source: ARA, *Rekenkamer*, 23357–23364)

Aachen	11887
Augsburg	39972
Basel	1331
Braunschweig	15626
Bremen	95
Cleves	18270
Colmar	86
Cologne	162567
Dorsten	87
Dortmund	597
Düren	314
Frankfurt	113626
Germany (unspecified)	44788
Hamburg	160
Heinsberg	75
Hessen	807
Juliers	2044
Leipzig	95865
Lübeck	741
Lüneburg	631
Münster	9929
Neuss	548
Norlingen	2290
Nuremberg	185390
Paderborn	80
Saxony	85
Speyer	721
Strasbourg	8065
Trier	3478
Ulm	246
Wesel	336
Westfalia	6345
Worms	133

APPENDIX 4

VALUE OF PRINCIPAL PRODUCTS EXPORTED FROM ANTWERP TO SOUTH GERMAN DESTINATIONS

(1543–1545)

(Source: *ARA, Rekenkamer, 23357–23364*)

	Augsburg	Nuremberg	Frankfurt	Leipzig
<i>Textiles</i>				
English Cloth	7480	25181	31408	28625
Cloth (unspecified origin)	5506	20369	25295	17946
English Kerseys	2929	25060	711	1413
Sayes	5278	18691	10149	8529
Amsterdam Cloth	3253	5523	876	531
Satins	313	3967	4695	5641
Flemish Cloths (Bruges, etc.)	245	695	752	202
Brabant Cloths (Mechelen, etc.)	57	1491	2060	2373
Demi-Ostades	837	2914	2244	2157
All other Textiles	809	6424	2051	474
<i>Spices</i>				
Pepper	655	54192	12201	16235
Ginger	370	2077	3251	827
Cinnamon	282	1064	1159	467
Cloves	130	1144	1031	506
All other Spices	115	4293	2001	393
<i>Sugar</i>				
São Tomé Sugar	1145	4128	2574	448
Sugar (unspecified origin)	453	1444	2909	57
Canaries Sugar	175	907	838	127
Madiera Sugar	44	228	13	0
All other Sugar Products	107	713	1031	316
<i>Dry Goods</i>	1109	5896	6424	7381

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Ch. C402. Edit de l'Empereur Charles V

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T. 92. Verhuerde Huizen. *Quoier voer de tresors vande verhuerde huysen ende plaetssen. 1552*

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T. 806. *Tolboek.*

T. 818. Tollen. (15–18th Centuries)

T. 1274–1277. Vreemde Crediteuren (16–18th Centuries)

T. 1279–1281. Vreemde Crediteuren

T. 1284–1285. Vreemde Crediteuren. (1560s–1570s)

T. 1287. Vreemde Crediteuren. *Affrekeningen gehouden met de creditteuren der stadt van Antwerpen op fraict ende finacie genegocieert Ao XVc LXX en LXXI*

T. 1288. Vreemde Creditueren. *Minute vande besoignee op de vuytlantsche creditteuren. 14 Aprilio 1593*

T. 1293. Vreemde Creditueren.

T. 1303. Duitse Schuld. *Journal oft register van Friets Poenner agent van eenighe Holstainse jonckeren creditteuren der stadt van Antwerpen. 1565–1570*

T. 1307 Uitlandse Crediteuren

Gilden en Ambachten

GA. 4508 bis. Privilegieboek van de Makelaars

GA. 4509. Makelaars. (1412–1793)

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N. 2070–2077. Notariaat 's Hertoghen. (1534–1561)

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